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August/September 1995
Number 55

FIRST THINGS

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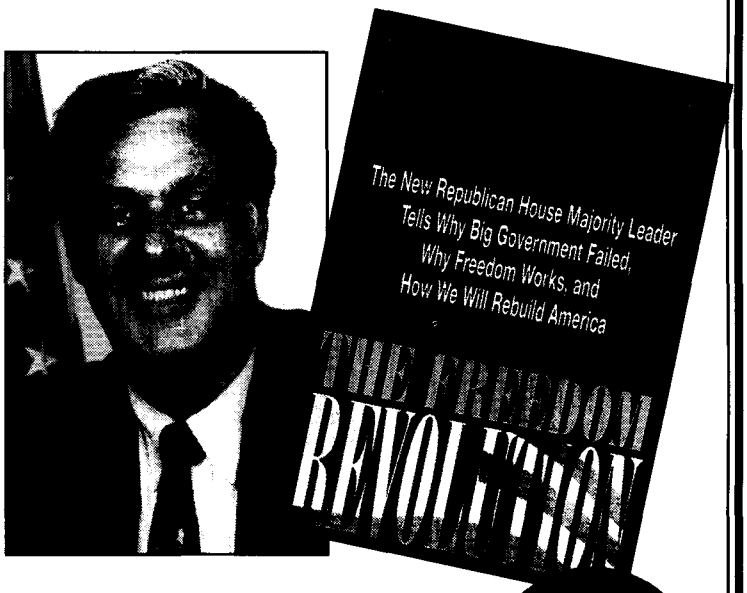

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FIRST THINGS

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

August/September 1995 • Number 55

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Defending Distributism

Rambling in the April Public Square the other day, minding my business and enjoying the view, I was suddenly set upon by a distantly familiar figure. It was Father Neuhaus, armed with nothing stronger than a back issue of the *Chesterton Review* and a bad dose of pique ("Economics in Verse and Prose" and "But To Be Fair . . ."). The *Review* contained an article in which I defended "distributism," the creed of small proprietorship frequently associated with G. K. Chesterton and his circle, in vogue a few years ago but now thought invincibly innocent in the face of a harsh competitive world. Initially taken aback, I was assured that my assailant would treat me with "an irresistible penchant to be fair." Up to a point this was true. He accused me of promoting poetry and preaching. Catching the glint of a clerical collar, I thought this promised well: he was about to hand over his own wallet. Here was the kind of distributism I could support any day of the week.

The presentiment of fairness was not sustained by what followed. Leave aside the oddity of a complaint of distributism's vacuity that omits mention of any of its arguments. Forget the peculiarity of dismissing poetic avenues to truth while quoting Johnson's verse as the beginning of political wisdom. Marvel rather at the skill with which straw men are tossed and gored. "Today it would seem that there are no alternatives to the market economy." Here is a proposition no distributist disputes. "It is a sloppy . . . habit of mind that blames the failings of this or that social order on 'capitalism.'" Any habit of mind so obviously sustained by cliché is sloppy. (Even more sloppy, by the way, is to assume equivalence within definitions of capitalism and anticapitalism.) "Distributism is an [antiquarian] economic theory . . . [rescued] by Chesterton's devoted disciples." It is not primarily an economic theory; it is not the property of any particular group; it has been criticized with more subtlety by Chestertonians than by "neoconservatives"; and it certainly makes no claim that only one model of economic behavior, ancient or modern, should be sanctioned.

The burden of Father Neuhaus' complaint is that distributism, engaging as social vision and even necessary as corrective to consumerism, has nothing but sermons to offer to "the world of economics daily chronicled by, say, the *Wall Street Journal.*" Could this be the same Father Neuhaus who has written that "the question about consumerism is not—certainly not most importantly—a question about economics. It is first of all a cultural and moral problem requiring a cultural and moral remedy" (*Doing Well and Doing Good*, p. 202)? The busy world of commerce is not to be denied or wished away, and Father Neuhaus is right to demand of distributists that they speak to it. The difficulty is not their silence but their garrulity. They have any number of responses to the *Wall Street Journal*, none of which deny the need for enterprise, competition, profit, personal responsibility, or creative engagement by individuals and communities with the earth's bounty. Distributism has its peculiarities and occasional inconsistencies, but it can offer a perfectly respectable self-justification on purely economic grounds.

Yet to speak of the dismal science is to miss the point. Distributism is less an economic theory than a moral anthropology. Its economic claims proceed from anterior moral claims about the acting person and the nature of charitable community. It is concerned above all with the creative subjectivity of human persons, their openness to transforming grace, and their capacity for dignity through work and property. So also is Father Neuhaus. Insofar as the debate between distributists and "neoconservatives" is interesting, it is for this reason.

The uninitiated must wonder, however, at the heat of a dispute surely more notable for agreements than disagreements. The commonalities are easily rendered. Each offers, with

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John Paul, a defense of private property, of the family, of subsidiarity, of the economic autonomy of the individual, of solidarity. Each lays claim to a distinctive notion of "community" about which there may be honorable debate. Each deplores the emptiness of collectivism and mass culture, the indignity of welfarism, the sterility of consumerism. Perhaps—that irresistible penchant to be fair again—a period of charitable cooperation is therefore in order.

Dermot Quinn
Department of History
Seton Hall University
South Orange, NJ

As the co-organizer and chairman of the International Chesterton Society's Croatian conference mentioned in the April issue, may I try to clarify a couple of points?

I invited to Zagreb a mixed group of theologians and economists, experts on law and Catholic social teaching, Chestertonians and non-Chestertonians. The purpose was not to "preach distributism" to Eastern Europe but to open a debate on the interpretation and application of contemporary Catholic social teaching in post-Communist societies. That debate did begin, and it continues.

Some of its participants (such as Dermot Quinn, Russell Sparkes, and those influenced by Dorothy Day, Wilhelm Roepke, or E. F. Schumacher) were and are much more sympathetic to the ideas and intuitions of the distributists than others. Some (notably David Schindler) developed their position expressly in terms of *Centesimus Annus* and the theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar. For all of us, the starting point and assumed framework for our discussion was the teaching of John Paul II that a free economy is now the only option for Europe. It is simply that many of us remain convinced that certain enduring principles affirmed by distributism and particularly by G. K. Chesterton can be helpful in fleshing out what exactly the Pope means by this "free economy."

However, it is important to make clear that the debate started by the conference, which has been taking place since that time within the pages of the *Chesterton Review, Communio, New Oxford Review* and elsewhere, is not and never has been merely about the relevance of distributism to Eastern Europe. In fact, talk about distributism can function as a distraction from the broader issue, which is precisely an attempt to respond to what Fr. Neuhaus calls "the structures and policies of the world of economics daily chronicled by, say, the *Wall Street Journal.*" That response is (and must be) in the first place theological. In other words, it must engage those structures at a level more profound than any at which the *Wall Street Journal* itself habitually operates. Some of the participants in our dialogue are professionally more concerned with engaging those structures at the level of economic policy, while remaining convinced, as I do, that the theological level is fundamental.

Inevitably, the bringing of this debate to the public eye has involved some of us in attempting to express our differences with the neoconservatives. I am sure that as a group we would regret giving any impression of unfriendliness through the tone of these criticisms, and would not wish to detract from the considerable neoconservative achievements of the last few years—not the least of which is the journal First Things itself. It would be a good thing if we could talk in a serious way about the matters that still divide us. No one here (least of all David Schindler) is proposing to "die for an economic theory," as Fr. Neuhaus puts it. But to take Christ seriously, we have to take theology seriously; and if we do that, we may find ourselves looking at economics in a different light.

Stratford Caldecott
Oxford, England

. . . One wonders if Fr. Neuhaus does not protest too much over the persistent criticism of American capitalism. He appears to find such criticism particularly inappropriate after the collapse of the purportedly only "real" alternative—state socialism. He dismisses as dreamy and naive any system other than capitalism, especially the distributism championed by Belloc and Chesterton.

Christians ought to have continuing reservations about a system that by its inner logic allows pornography, drug trafficking, prostitution, and child labor. Through law derived from our religious traditions we restrain these social pathologies, but capitalism itself makes no such moral distinctions. It knows nothing of love and mercy, without which no human civilization can long survive. . . .

If we believe, as apparently does much of the Catholic tradition, that small entrepreneurship, worker participation in the ownership of industrial concerns, and family farming are also good, i.e., conducive to a more stable society and tending to foster a more Christian way of life, then a set of policies and a legislative agenda to promote these are not difficult to formulate. Tax incentives (and disincentives) alone can easily encourage small scale entrepreneurship and the growth of ESOP's (Employee Stock Ownership Plans). The elimination of agricultural subsidies to large concerns would benefit the family farm. Zoning laws can favor traditional shops over the proliferation of Wal-Marts and other megastores. Even giving the poor access to capital can be achieved by adjustments in the tax treatment of loans or seed capital to those not yet in the "circle of productivity and exchange."

The issue then is not whether the distributist ideal can be approached through the democratic process; it certainly can and in some aspects it already has. The real issue is whether we as a Christian people are willing to put limits on our material prosperity for the sake of a more authentically Christian way of life.

Nicholas J. Healy, Jr.
Franciscan University of
Steubenville
Steubenville, OH

I rather suspect that if G. K. Chesterton were alive today he would, far from sharing Father Neuhaus' infatuation with "democratic" capital-

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ism, be mourning the fact that his warnings were not heeded, that corporations have grown unbelievably huge and centralized while family farms and shops have nearly disappeared.

But defending Chesterton against the criticisms of Catholic neoconservatives is rather like defending a giant against a band of pygmies: the pygmies may appreciate being taken seriously, but it is hardly a pressing or necessary task.

And why do you misrepresent Dr. David Schindler's criticism of neoconservatism as "a dispute over an economic theory"? His criticism is primarily a theological one and I have never seen any of the neoconservatives address his objections. The economic critique put forward by others is secondary.

Daniel Nichols
Wooster, OH

Cure for the Blues?

James Nuechterlein's "Lutheran Blues" (April) have been just what I have been singing lately too. But what makes them wonderful is the echo of Luther's lament heard in them.

Twelve years into the Reformation, Martin Luther wrote in the preface to his *Large Catechism* that the clergy should "feel a little shame because, like pigs and dogs, they remember no more of the Gospel than this rotten, pernicious, shameful, carnal liberty." "As it is," he went on, "the common people take the gospel altogether too lightly." Then, twenty years after the Reformation had begun, he wrote in the preface to his *Smalcald Articles*: "There are some who are so spiteful—not only among our adversaries, but also false brethren among those who profess to be adherents of our party—that they dare to cite my writings and teachings against me. They let me look and listen, although they know very well that I teach otherwise. They try to clothe their venomous spirits in the garments of my labor and thus mislead the poor people in my name. Imagine what will happen after I am dead!"

Unlike Mr. Nuechterlein, however, Luther did not "find it difficult to imagine how things might be turned around." In his 1519 *Treatise on the Sacrament of Penance*, he wrote how to straighten out the wayward. "One must first soften them up with the terrible judgment of God and cause them to quail, so that they too may learn to sigh." Reintroducing what is hard-hitting—like the wrath of God, penance, fasting, and self-mortification—will go a long ways toward ending the Lutheran blues.

(The Rev.) Ronald F. Marshall
First Lutheran Church of
West Seattle
Seattle, WA

James Nuechterlein's article on the state of Lutheranism was an interesting one. However, Mr. Nuechterlein betrayed a lack of insight into the internal dynamics (admittedly byzantine) of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Nuechterlein suggests that the Synod's position on biblical inerrancy has caused a "susceptibility to evangelicalism and church growth" and styles of piety alien to Lutheranism. Nothing could be further from the truth. The most prominent defenders of inerrancy in the Missouri Synod, the theologians Kurt Marquart and Robert Preus, are also among the most vigorous opponents of the Church Growth Movement and Reformed worship styles. Defenders of inerrancy are almost absent in the Church Growth and Charismatic camps.

I agree with James Nuechterlein's diagnosis that anti-Lutheran viruses abound in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. But the cause of the sickness that pervades the Synod is not to be found among the defenders of God's inerrant Word.

Kenneth J. Schmidt
Pompton Lakes, NJ

I wish that James Nuechterlein would be more precise in writing about what he sees as problems in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. For example, he says the LCMS's insistence on literal inerrancy leaves it "vulnerable to charges of biblicist obscurantism."

Webster's defines "biblicist" as "a person who interprets the Bible literally." "Obscurantism" is defined as "1. opposition to the increase and spread of knowledge; 2. deliberate obscurity or evasion of clarity."

What exactly does the Missouri Synod's alleged insistence on literal inerrancy obscure? Does it prevent LCMS members from a careful, historical study of the biblical text? (In several cases, I would argue, "Yes, it does!") Or does Mr. Nuechterlein mean that it prevents the Missouri Synod from getting sucked into "the assured results" of the latest liberationist, feminist, or multiculturalist study? (In several cases, I would argue, "Yes, it does!") But what exactly does the FIRST THINGS' columnist mean to say? I really don't know. . . .

Robert J. Mueller
Mandeville, LA

How Should He Presume?

In "Poverty and the Partisan Press" (April) Michael Novak points out that since the advent of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society and its socialist transfer of wealth programs, crime rates and illegitimate births have soared. He writes, "Those of us who were in favor of the poverty programs never predicted such outcomes." But free market economists did, as well as most other conservatives, who understood that the federal bureaucracies administering AFDC, food stamps, and public housing projects would only multiply the problems of the underclass. Mr. Novak sounds like Eliot's Prufrock: "That is not what I meant at all. That is not it, at all."

Gregory Galassini
Astoria, NY

Michael Novak replies:

My comfort is the parable about those who came to labor in the vineyard late; but my sin was exactly as Prufrock puts it.

Rivers of Blood?

A footnote to Dennis Teti's fine article "John Brown Redux" (April). On the scaffold from which he was

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hanged on December 2, 1859, this convicted multiple murderer declared: "I, John Brown, am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away but by blood." Just over sixteen months later the Civil War began and the rivers of blood began to flow. Mindful of today's abortion crimes—1.5 million unborn babies killed annually, justified with arguments chillingly identical to those once used to justify slavery—can we say that our land is less guilty than that which John Brown beheld for the last time on that December day in 1859?

(The Rev.) John Jay Hughes
St. Louis, MO

Understanding Glossolalia

It was heartening to read in Peter Berger's "The Vernacularist Illusion" (April) something positive about the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement. First Things seems to be ignoring or disparaging this influential movement. Charismatic gifts and ministries are powerful antidotes to the rationalistic tendencies of modern theology and culture. The associated praise and worship music that is sweeping the world may not be to the editors' taste, but it is, I believe, maturing into a lasting religious expression.

Next time may Mr. Berger visit a church (Anglican or otherwise) that is alive in the Charismatic renewal.

Ralph Gillmann
Burke, VA

Peter L. Berger's article uses a most inappropriate argument, or maybe says more than he realizes.

Catholic and Episcopalian liturgies have gone to vernacular English to make them more intelligible to the congregation, and hopefully, thereby, help decrease the loss of members. Mr. Berger argues that liturgical intelligibility is not the problem because Pentecostalism is "spreading like a prairie fire" despite its unintelligible glossolalia.

This argument is invalid. Liturgy attempts to create a sense of religious wonder and awe by touching the intellect and emotions of the individual, whereas glossolalia results from an individual experiencing the transcendent, supernatural power of God.

The liturgy, like good theater, stirs the individual internally by using external stimuli. In contrast, glossolalia is a result—not a stimulus. It is the bursting forth of exalted worship. An overwhelming visitation of God calls forth a depth of worship that is beyond the ability of the individual to express. In a state of ecstasy the individual is caught up into enraptured worship that when voiced comes forth as glossolalia.

The rapid spread of Pentecostalism is a result of the concrete, physical contact with God that Pentecostals teach and experience. Conversely, liturgy is commonly good theater that often provides little more than an emotional stir—if that.

Mr. Berger is correct. Intelligibility is not the problem.

Forrest H. Scott
Middletown, OH

One never knows quite when to take Peter Berger's On the Other Hand column seriously. When he used the example of Pentecostalism as an argument against the vernacularizing tendency in worship, I wasn't sure whether to laugh or think. Since then I've done both.

As one who has participated regularly in charismatic services recently, I can confirm the basic accuracy of Mr. Berger's statements about glossolalia (speaking in tongues). An appealing feature of this kind of worship is its "divine otherness" compared to the mundane activities of life. I suspect one of the driving forces behind vernacularization is a fear of looking foolish, a feeling that outsiders will listen to the Latin or Elizabethan words and think, "How silly! These people are really behind the times." But St. Paul said that "the foolishness of God is wiser than men." Pentecostal worship puts "God's foolishness" right out in the open. Observers may draw their own conclusions, but at a typical charismatic service there is no question in anyone's mind that something out of the ordinary is going on. You can't mistake it for a Rotary Club meeting. . . .

Karl D. Stephan
Belchertown, MA

Frankly, I don't think Peter Berger gets it.

He asserts that the rise in Pentecostalism and the charismatic movement is due to people's desire to relate to God in a language they don't understand. Mr. Berger then calls for the return to "higher" or more poetic language, as if this will bring more people into church.

I agree that many mainline denominations are shrinking because their members are going elsewhere to find "transcendence." However, transcendence is not a matter of what tongue one speaks in, be it of angels or men, glossolalia or Latin. First of all, the typical charismatic church service is not "dominated by glossolalia," as Mr. Berger asserts. The songs (be they hymns or choruses), the sermon, the Bible readings, even the liturgy (if it's an Episcopal or Catholic charismatic church) are all in English. Worshippers may sing or speak in tongues during the singing time, and sometimes a prophecy might be given in tongues (which is then interpreted), but most of the service is conducted in English. . . .

Mr. Berger ends his column by extoling the service he attended in London with a few old ladies and an even older vicar. His description of the state of this dying church belies his thesis that it is the vernacular that turns people away; if people want the transcendence of the "unexpurgated" Book of Common Prayer then why aren't they filling the pews of this nearly empty church? I have nothing against traditions (I happen to like the Book of Common Prayer), but we must not let them take the place of real worship, or use them to shut out people who have not grown up in the tradition. I'm not advocating dumbing down the Gospel, but I am advocating communicating it.

So many mainline churches are buttoned-down places where people go to sing a couple of hymns, as staidly as possible, hear a sermon, and

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leave. They have heard *about* God, but there is little opportunity for relating *to* God during the service. This is what the charismatic churches try to provide. Through heartfelt songs, moments of silence for personal prayer and reflection, and an openness to hear from people who feel God is speaking to them (whether or not it is God is a matter of discernment), this type of service encourages the expectation that God is here and that we can experience Him, individually or corporately, during the service. This provides the transcendence so many of us seek.

Shannon K. West
Mountlake Terrace, WA

A Persistent Pattern

In the While We're At It section of The Public Square (April) Fr. Neuhaus makes the comment that "last summer, the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine* ran an article titled 'Regulating Physician-Assisted Death.' Getting implicit support from *NEJM* was a big score for the pro-euthanasia side."

Not at all. The *NEJM* first hinted at support for direct patient killing in a 1988 editorial, and since then there has been a disturbing pattern that hints at a deliberate editorial bias in favor of legalizing euthanasia.

Since the 1988 editorial, there have been eight pro-euthanasia articles, four of which devised guidelines; what is more significant is that, in a journal that turns down nine out of ten papers, six of the papers were written by only four authors.

In contrast, the neutral or "anti" forces have managed to get only five articles published.

Perhaps more significantly, other points of view were not given coverage. For example, "religious" points of view were given one paragraph in one article—and, as the saying goes, "he just didn't get it"—even though the value system of most Americans has a theological basis.

The blind denial of the *NEJM* of the limitations of bureaucratic regulation as evidenced by the problems of undesired euthanasia in the Netherlands is, however, long-standing. Nine papers published between 1988 and 1992 pointed out that the Dutch had successfully implemented physician-aided dying under "strict guidelines" (this was even mentioned favorably in papers opposing the practice!), and there was no mention in the *NEJM* of the problems of unwanted euthanasia in that country until mid-1993.

Yet problems with the "Dutch experiment" were reported in the lay press and in ethical journals as far back as 1988, and confirmed by the 1991 Remmelink Report of the Dutch government. This is an astonishing omission in a journal that claims: "There is nothing reprehensible about honest error, but there must be a willingness to search it out, report it faithfully, and follow the new evidence wherever it may lead." Apparently, with respect to medical ethics, political correctness is more important than scientific integrity.

The party line is succeeding, since few other medical journals have alerted their readers to the "adverse effects" of the "Dutch experiment." As a result, there has been little opposition in the medical community when those who support changing our social policies continue to repeat the myth that guidelines would protect the public.

N. K. O'Connor, M.D.
Nanty Glo, PA

Death and Feeding Tubes

Nancy Harvey's article "Dying Like A Dog" (April) motivates me to give another point of view on feeding tubes. She says that we cannot overcome death. That states the obvious, but it is important to keep that point in mind. That leads to what I think are the key questions: when should we attempt to delay death, and to what lengths do we go to accomplish this?

To me, Ms. Harvey implies that regardless of the patient's life expectancy, doctors should always insert a feeding tube. She writes about situations that range from a patient given a few weeks to live to a young person fully alert but physically handicapped. The context that guides my thoughts is the patient in the advanced stages of Alzheimer's disease who has lost the ability to swallow. By this time, she no longer recognizes family members and friends. This patient can feel pain, confusion, depression, and anxiety, but feels little pleasure.

I agree with Ms. Harvey that we should never remove food and liquid from a patient. However, she seems to take an either/or approach to the feeding tube: either you insert the feeding tube, or you have withdrawn food and liquid. This should not be the case and does not have to be the case. Staff or family can make food available and attempt to spoon feed. The important question regarding a feeding tube is when is it the appropriate way to give food.

When an Alzheimer's patient reaches the advanced stage, I don't believe death should be delayed by inserting a feeding tube. I do think family, friends, and nursing staff should try to spoon feed liquids and food at regular intervals. I think the patient should be treated with care and compassion. But I don't think death should be delayed by a feeding tube.

Jim Elliot
Atlanta, GA

Nancy Harvey replies:

Mr. Elliot expresses concern about the severe Alzheimer's patient who is being offered nourishment by family, friends, and nursing staff. Of course, staying with a patient and coaxing him to eat is much better than using a tube. It is certainly more fun for the patient. It is also more difficult to label a spoonful of scrambled eggs "medical treatment" and have it stopped so that the patient starves to death. Tubes are needed only when that patient cannot or will not eat. It is unfortunate that they are widely used to save time and money, when the patient could be enjoying a spaghetti dinner.

The problem with the tube and the Alzheimer's patient comes when the patient will not eat or drink no matter how hard we coax. We insert the tube, but the patient pulls it out. Do we tie such people down, sedate

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them, and use the tube anyway? I am not sure, but I do know two things. Once a diagnosis of Alzheimer's is made, some doctors look no further, and every problem is labeled "Alzheimer's." There may be other causes for loss of appetite, or refusal to eat—cancer, Chrohn's disease, or, as in the case of my aunt, paranoia resulting from over-medication. We did "force" her to have a stomach tube (with restraints), but when her medication was adjusted she was able to walk to the dining room and enjoy her favorite foods.

Finally, I think we must be very cautious when a doctor says that someone "doesn't feel it." We simply cannot know exactly how that person feels. It is true that some older people do not feel heat and cold and pain exactly as we middle-aged folks do. But pain thresholds vary among people at any age. I know a man in his nineties who seems to be as sensitive to pain as I am. And starvation and dehydration are not exactly pain. They are immensely overwhelming sensations—every part of the body suffers, and the mind knows it, unless it is completely unaware of any sensation at all.

I find the idea of restraints and sedation repugnant, and restraints without sedation horrifying. But I also find horrifying the idea of a person starving because his mind is so confused that it no longer knows how to satisfy the painful cravings of his body.

A Sacramental Gift

I would like you to know how much I enjoyed Matthew Scully's interview with Viktor Frankl in the April issue.

Mr. Frankl is now ninety and that generation is slipping away from us. Soon there will be no live witnesses left to remind us of how fast we can fall from being a civilized society to something unspeakable. Frankl's transcendence and sanctification (I'm sure he would forgive and understand the use of that word) of his suffering is surely one of the most extraordinary events of the era.

Someone once said that as a visible sign of God's presence on earth, the Jews were the first sacrament. After reading Mr. Scully's account, could any Christian argue against Mr. Frankl's life as being sacramental using even that classical catechism definition of a sacrament as being a visible sign instituted by God to give grace?

Thanks to Mr. Scully for reminding us of that which is so rightly to be remembered and even cherished from an otherwise nightmarish era.

Michael J. Reynolds
Tarrytown, NY

Real Issues

I was disappointed and even somewhat troubled to read Fr. Neuhaus' commentary regarding Alister McGrath's discussion of the new Roman Catholic Catechism ("Protestant Reformation and Universal Church," Public Square, March).

I agree that one should not expect the new Catechism to deal extensively with the Reformation. Yet Fr. Neuhaus responds by trivializing *sola fide* as a "sixteenth-century" concern not relevant to the majority of Christians. *Sola fide* is the sole means of receiving the grace of justification, which is in turn the very core of the Gospel itself. Fr. Neuhaus' response illustrates that our two camps may have rather more substantial disagreements than mere semantic issues and *adiaphora.*

I gladly support, with a few qualms about wording, the *Evangelicals and Catholics Together* document. I recognize that many Roman Catholics are fellow regenerate Christians. Yet I cannot accept that all are, any more than I can accept that all who warm pews in evangelical congregations are.

Sola fide is an essential issue, as important as Chalcedon and the Athanasian Creed. It answers the basic question asked not only in the sixteenth century, but also in the first, and, *nissi Dominus frustra,* in the twenty-first: "How might a man be saved?"...

Stephen D. Schaper
Saint Louis, MO

Woman With Baby

Apropos of the comment (recorded in While We're At It, April) on the "sexism" of the Baby with the Madonna always being a boy, a woman in New Jersey last Christmas asked a postal clerk if he had stamps other than those with candy canes. His reply: "Well, we have some with a woman and a baby." Honestly!

Yours for Christian education.

Robert H. Moore, Jr.
Bluefield, WV

Greek God Gaffe

"John J. Savant on Dionysius," said your May cover, and so I eagerly opened my copy anticipating a discussion of the Areopagite, author of record of the Christian Neoplatonic treatise "On the Divine Names." Imagine my surprise when I discovered an article about "Dionysus," in which the god's name was misspelled (no casual misprint this) eleven times, ten times too many for a journal of the quality of First Things.

To be sure, between Dionysus and Dionysius the difference is only a single iota, but an iota's difference can be considerable: witness the fourth-century controversy about the nature of Christ (*homoousios* versus *homoiousios*). The article itself was no better than the confusion in its spelling would lead one to expect. But Dionysus has proved to be the graveyard of common sense and clarity many times before this. Here murk and obnubilation are the rule, and to invoke Dionysus to shed light on the problems of our age is an example of the fault *obscurum per obscurius explicare.* No more on Dionysus, please: he who would sup with that devil must have a long spoon.

Occasional lapses apart, First Things is a great pleasure to read. But iotas (this time missing ones) remain a problem. "To deprecate" is to wish the nonexistence of, while "to depreciate" is to speak slightingly of: the modest are self-depreciating, deprecating praise of themselves, but only the suicidal are self-deprecating. If Fr. Neuhaus would instruct his copyeditors to check all instances

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of the first to make sure it shouldn't be the second (and also replace the substandard "alright" with "all right"), FIRST THINGS would be as perfect as sublunary conditions allow.

David Kovacs
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA

The Editors reply:

Alright already. In fact, there is a longstanding in-house dispute over "alright" and "all right," so we play it by ear. As for "deprecate" and "depreciate," our office dictionaries offer contradictory testimony, so we will stick by the one that agrees with us. But Prof. Kovacs did catch us with our classics down on Dionysus (a.k.a. Bacchus). The proofreaders responsible have been informed that they get only water at the next office bacchanalia. (To our teetotalling subscribers: Just kidding. All right?)

Long and Short

Mitch said: "I'm trying hard to live
To seventy."
I think about it constantly:
How half
A century is an abyss not all
Can cross—
"This field, once, was home to brains
And tigers—"
And paint the mystery, how time
(A wheel)
Describes the line (that's history)
On earth
Where people (at the tangent point)
Buckle,
Bear the weight, or run behind.
Or break
Into those dances oceans sing
To dunes,
Or ice.

Leon Schapiro fled
The terror
First to Paris then New York.
A chronicler
Of the Jews, white hair, blue eyes,
Wood cane,
Beret. Right off he said: "We need
A lawyer.
To be old is terrible."
Howard,
Eighty, in Jamaica, kept
Two wives,
A shop and the beach towel concession.
Ninety,
Jimmy asked his son's wife's friend
To come
Away with him, to fish in warmer seas.
The landlord,
Heller, rhymed behind his desk:
"Money's honey,
How does that help
When you're old
And it's cold
In your soul?
My son is so religious he
Won't eat
At the same table with me."

Once
I didn't hear at all, or hearing
Thought
The softly said need not
Be marked,
And turned back to the book,
The board,
The ball beneath the sycamore.
My father
Also thundered like the god
Who's killed
Most, doesn't wonder about might
Have been.
"Have you changed at all
In order
To live longer?" "No, as always
Exercise,
Right food and rest. Also avoid
The doctor."
Also disbelieve in numbers.

Laurance Wieder

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This Time

Waco, Wackos, and Politics

James Nuechterlein

First Things normally takes quiet pride in its disregard of the merely topical. We write and edit, if not for the ages, at least with a view more long run than that provided by yesterday's or tomorrow's headlines. It is true that in The Public Square and occasionally elsewhere we take account of the passing scene, but even then our long lead time (if nothing else) decrees that we comment not in immediate response but with somewhat distanced reflection. In the face of journalistic convention, we almost never have need to stop the presses, and developing news stories seldom find their way into our pages.

It came as a considerable shock, then, that the publication of our May issue, featuring a long lead essay (our longest ever) on the 1993 Waco tragedy, coincided with the bombing of the federal government building in Oklahoma City, supposedly by a man motivated in major part by his anger over government behavior at Waco. Oklahoma City made Waco news again, and First Things found itself, by grim coincidence, in an unaccustomed position at journalism's cutting edge. Both the essay and its author, Dean M. Kelley, received extensive notice in major newspapers across the country, and Mr. Kelley's many interviews concerning his piece included segments on *60 Minutes* and the *MacNeil/Lehrer Newshour*. For the first time, First Things flirted with notoriety. We became, you might say, neo-famous.

So far as we can tell, the overwhelming majority of our readers responded favorably to the Waco story. The great strength of the piece, many said, was Mr. Kelley's measured, matter-of-fact approach to an episode that could easily have lent itself to sensationalist treatment. The author told his terrible story with a minimum of embellishment or editorial comment. The unadorned narrative indicts the government quite on its own. It is difficult to imagine an objective reader who would examine the facts of the matter and not conclude that both the original raid on the Branch Davidians by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms on February 23 and the subsequent assault on the Davidians' residence by the FBI on April 19 were, to put the matter as mildly as possible, entirely avoidable disasters. Some eighty-five people—four of them ATF agents, the rest Branch Davidians—died unnecessarily because of unconscionable blundering by government agencies.

The grave implications of Mr. Kelley's report made a few readers nervous. Understandably ignorant of FT's production schedule, they worried whether our Waco story might intend a measure of exoneration—or at least mitigation—for Timothy McVeigh or whoever it was who blew up the federal building in Oklahoma City. (Hardly possible, since the bombing occurred after the issue was published.) More plausibly, at least on the surface, they wondered whether the article might be understood as a defense of the bizarre theology of the Branch Davidians' leader, David Koresh, or as contributing, even after the fact, to a climate of overheated political discourse somehow implicated in the bombing tragedy.

About David Koresh, the point is simple. The editors of First Things don't presume to speak for Dean Kelley, but none of us would offer ourselves as supporters or defenders of Mr. Koresh's apocalyptic visions. But that is entirely beside the point. Our society does not ordinarily kill people for expounding bad theology. The evidence Mr. Kelley presents suggests strongly that Koresh acted defensively, not offensively. At the time of the original ATF raid, he opened the door of the residence—*unarmed*—and pleaded, "What do you want? There's women and children in here!" He saw himself as a beleaguered victim, not as an agent of divine vengeance against an apostate world. (He may have been in violation of various gun laws, but that is not normally considered a capital offense.)

The larger point concerning the climate of political opinion has gotten obscured in a flurry of partisan charges and countercharges. No serious reader of Dean Kelley's essay could read it as inflammatory or irresponsible. But there is room for legitimate concern over how America in general conducts its political debates, even if one can't trust politicians to lead that discussion. President Clinton began the muddying of the waters when he presented, on *60 Minutes*, a grossly distorted account of the original ATF raid at Waco, one that made it appear that the mass assault by the government—which in fact had no clear provocation—was a perfectly ordinary presentation of a warrant for search and arrest. Those nut groups on the right who live by paranoid fantasies of an America controlled by one or another branch of the Illuminati could hardly have asked for better testimony. Where an apology was in order, there was only blind defense of the indefensible.

Beyond that, the President took the occasion of the bombing to initiate a debate on "hate speech." Here he had a point, even if it was both partial and

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self-interested. When leaders of the National Rifle Association indulge in dark comments about "jackbooted government thugs" in order to justify their reading of the Second Amendment they go beyond acceptable rhetorical boundaries, and former President Bush was right to call them on it. This is not to say that specific charges along those lines are always improper. The ATF, in particular, has in a number of documented instances acted in ways for which the term "thuggish" is precisely appropriate. But there are crazies on the fringes of American politics eager to seize on any glimmer of evidence suggesting government conspiracies to destroy constitutional liberties. We can't let their paranoia inhibit robust political debate, but neither can we be indifferent to their presence in the things we say concerning our political opponents. The line of the allowable cannot be drawn exactly, but it can be suggested: most of us understand, for example, that Rush Limbaugh stands within it, Gordon Liddy beyond.

The responsibility of government in all this is to conduct its law enforcement activities in ways that do not invite extremist response. And when it acts otherwise—as it surely did at Waco—it should concede its errors rather than concoct elaborate justifications for malfeasance. It surely cannot expect its misdeeds to be ignored or to receive other than intense scrutiny and rebuke.

First Things will not normally be taking the lead in the kind of investigative reporting Dean Kelley so valuably provided about Waco. Being on journalism's cutting edge has its excitements, but we've always thought that it's not the place where first things are—or First Things ordinarily ought to be—located. FT

The Theodicies of the Rural

We drive nails into the hooves, twist off
the horns with worn vise grips, separate mates,
pluck the tails, shave the wool, amputate
the balls, check carefully every wet cough,
hide the pincers inside the leather gloves
(the same soft leather used for critics' shoes),
and eye the fluctuations in market news;
we pat the beasts that we really do love,
groom them tenderly for 4-H events,
eat spiced beef sandwiches and drink weak beer,
watch the authorities gauge the worth of our steers,
and visit the county fair's gospel tent.

The music rises in the sweet summer air
as the beasts begin to speak, in some kind of Catholic
nativity, as they put on flesh, lick
each others' wounds, and join with us, in prayer.

Craig Payne

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Opinion

Why Protestants Still Protest

Peter J. Leithart

Several years ago, I did some research on Roman Catholics who had converted to conservative Protestant churches. What intrigued me most about those who shared their experiences with me was the large number who said that they left the Catholic Church because they became Christians or that they became Christians after leaving. At least in retrospect, these converts do not think they were Christians while they were in the Catholic Church.

Though I am a Protestant with fundamental objections to certain Catholic practices and doctrines, I found these testimonies puzzling. The Catholic Church, after all, explicitly confesses Jesus Christ as God and Savior. The Christian Bible occupies a central place in its liturgy and doctrine. Catholics are baptized in the name of the Triune God and celebrate the sacrament of Christ's body and blood. But meanwhile, some attain adulthood as Catholics apparently without ever considering themselves Christians. How does this happen?

I was given a number of answers to this question. Some Catholics claim that conservative Protestants have a monopoly on the word "Christian." Others imply that Protestant "sects" virtually brainwash converts with anti-Catholic propaganda. Still others say the problem is pastoral rather than theological; Catholic doctrine requires conscious faith of each member of the Church, but the force of this teaching gets lost in the rituals of automatic infant baptism and confirmation.

Some Catholic leaders have admitted the Catholic Church's own culpability for this situation. The Most Reverend Pastor Cuquejo, Auxiliary Bishop of Asunción, Paraguay, attributes the strength of Protestant "sects" in Latin America to the failure of the Catholic Church to keep the gospel central to its mission: "We have at times advanced to a 'second stage' of evangelization without laying the foundation for everything else: the *kerygma*, the apostolic preaching of the Church about the good news of the life and passion and Resurrection of Jesus Christ—which has to be the first stage of any valid evangelization." Along similar lines, the Rev. John Catoir has written, "My own instinct is that the Catholic Church has not emphasized Jesus Christ enough in its teaching. He is certainly central to the Church, but the popular perception of Catholicism is that it is more issue-oriented than Christ-centered."

These observations are both refreshingly honest and, in my judgment, profoundly true. But I would go still further to suggest that the tendency to obscure the gospel and to displace Christ is inherent in Roman Catholic theology and practice. At this point, a Protestant might be expected to launch into a defense of the Reformation doctrine of justification or an assault on the papacy. In my view, the more theologically fundamental point dividing Roman Catholics from conservative Protestants is the doctrine of revelation, and specifically the relation of Scripture to tradition. The nineteenth-century church historian Philip Schaff called *sola Scriptura* the "formal principle" of the Reformation, but this "formal principle" affects piety and religious experience in very substantial ways.

One of the lesser-known works of John Calvin is a tract whose short title is "An Inventory of Relics." It is predominantly a sharp attack on the extremes of medieval Catholic piety—practices that I imagine many Catholics would today dismiss as empty superstitions. Samples of Christ's hair, teeth, even his foreskin were distributed across Europe, and so much of Jesus' blood had been preserved as to "be diffused over the whole world." Calvin complained that "had the most Holy Virgin yielded a more copious supply [of milk] than is given by a cow, or had she continued to nurse during her whole lifetime, she scarcely could have furnished the quantity which is exhibited." The complaint could have been written by Voltaire.

Calvin's attack on relic veneration, however, was grounded in an evangelical insight that lies at the heart of the Reformation. "The first abuse," Calvin wrote, "and, as it were, the beginning of the evil, was that when Christ ought to have been sought in his Word, sacraments, and spiritual influences, the world, after its wont, clung to his garments, vests, and swaddling clothes; and thus overlooking the principal matter, followed only its accessory." In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin offered a similar critique of the liturgical tradition of the medieval Church. Formally, Calvin's argument is that many medieval ceremonies were human inventions, unwarranted by Scripture. It would be a mistake, however, to reduce his argument to a trivial quarrel over the warrant for this vestment or that gesture. Calvin's principal concern was evangelical and pastoral; he wished to direct sinners to that "place" where they could encounter the living God. Ceremonies, he argued, "to be exercises of piety, ought to lead us straight to Christ." Ceremonies and devotional practices that fail this test are best

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removed from the Church.

For Calvin, then, *sola Scriptura* was inseparable from *solus Christus*. *Solus Christus* and *sola Scriptura* were the Reformation's answers to two fundamental religious questions. *Solus Christus* answered the question, How can I have communion with God? *Sola Scriptura* answered the logically prior epistemological question, From what source do I learn how I can commune with God? *Solus Christus* means Jesus alone can bring sinners into true life, the life of fellowship with the Triune God. *Sola Scriptura* means the Scriptures are Christ's unique revelation of the way to life; it means that Scripture alone, being the Word of God, identifies where the living and life-giving Christ can be found. The Reformers found in Scripture that Christ had promised to meet with His gathered people through His Spirit, His Word, and the Sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism. To see Him elsewhere is to search in vain.

At this point, Calvin's attack on relics and superfluous ceremonies strikes at the foundations of Roman Catholicism, both medieval and modern. While Jesus promised to offer Himself to His people through bread and wine, Calvin argued, He never promised to encounter them through icons or relics. While Jesus promised that sinners could gain access to the Father through Him, He nowhere promised access to the Father through the saints or Mary. While Jesus promised that Scripture gives wisdom leading to salvation, He never promised to communicate that wisdom through papal decrees. The Roman Catholic Church had, Calvin admitted, preserved the Word and Sacraments, so that one could come to know God truly in the Catholic Church. But the Word and Sacraments had been so shrouded by layers of tradition and distracting ceremony that Christ could be perceived only with difficulty. Calvin charged, in short, that Roman Catholicism taught people to look for God in all the wrong places.

Ultimately, this a question of truth. If the Reformers were wrong about *sola Scriptura*, they were wrong too about the source of errors in the Catholic Church. For myself, I stand with Calvin, who, I am certain, would be as heartened as I to hear the recent calls from Roman Catholic leaders to reaffirm the centrality of the gospel, Jesus Christ, and Scripture. Given even a modest open door, the Word of God can take care of itself; it never, Scripture says, returns void. Though Protestants believe that Roman Catholic teaching continues to veil the Christ of the gospel, we know that God has a habit of rending veils.

PETER J. LEITHART *is Pastor of Reformed Heritage Presbyterian Church in Alabaster, Alabama.*

Why Protestants Protest Too Much

John M. Haas

The man sitting next to me on the plane was pleasant enough. He was well dressed, had a kind face, and showed a surprisingly friendly concern for me as a total stranger. So when he finally revealed that he was a Protestant minister, I was not surprised. He spoke openly and easily of his faith and of the joy he had found in his relationship with the Lord.

He continued to be courteous to me even when he learned that I was Catholic. He said that he was pleased to learn that I, too, knew and loved the Lord Jesus. But as the conversation progressed, he eventually could not avoid giving expression to a frustration he had with the Catholic Church.

"You know," he said, "I just cannot understand why you Catholics engage in these practices which have no basis in Scripture!"

"Oh?" I responded, a bit surprised. "What particular practices did you have in mind?"

"Well, for example, this practice of men presuming to forgive other men's sins! This practice of confession," he replied.

"But that *is* based on Scripture," I insisted. "After Our Lord's resurrection, He appeared to His disciples in an upper room, He breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit! Whose soever sins you forgive are forgiven, whose soever sins you retain are retained!'"

"Well, that may be in your Bible," he responded. "It's not in our Protestant Bible."

"Do you have a copy of your Bible with you?" I asked.

"Of course, I do," he responded reproachfully, as though I thought he might travel without it.

I took the worn, black leatherbound King James Bible he handed me, turned to the twentieth chapter of John, and read the passage aloud in its eloquent Elizabethan prose.

A look of astonishment and confusion came over the man's face. "I never noticed that before," he said. After a moment's silence, he went on, "I'm going to have to think about this."

Of course that kindly minister had undoubtedly read the passage many times before. But he had never done so in the light of Catholic practice.

Over the years I have often wondered what happened to him. I have wondered whether his new way of looking at Scripture might have eventually led him down the path to the Catholic Church that so many of my friends have traveled. Most of the Protes-

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tants whom I know who have become Catholics (the number seems to grow every year) did so because of their love for Scripture, not despite it.

We knew a married couple, both of them physicians, who loved our Lord deeply as Protestants and searched His Scriptures daily. And as their knowledge of the Bible grew, it seemed to them that what they experienced in the Protestant Church did not conform to the witness of Scripture to the extent that Catholic practice did. They read, for example, the biblical accounts of Jesus handing over His authority to forgive sins to His apostles, and they saw that the Catholic Church carried on this ministry of the Lord into their own day through the sacrament of penance while their Protestant denomination did not.

They read Jesus' words about the Eucharist, "This is my Body . . . This is my Blood," and found their Catholic friends believing it quite literally while Protestants gave the words various interpretations that weakened the obvious meaning of what the Word Incarnate Himself had said. They read of the instruction of James to the Christians to call upon the elders of the Church to anoint the sick in the name of the Lord. They saw the practice in the Catholic Church but looked in vain for it within their own.

Finally, out of a desire to be more faithful to Scripture and to come closer to their Lord, they asked to be received into the Catholic Church and to be admitted to the sacraments, in which they believed that they encounter Christ Himself. They had come to see that sacraments are not obstacles that must be overcome in order to encounter Jesus, but that they are the very means that God ordained for them to come to Christ. They saw the Catholic truth that the humanity of Jesus is no obstacle to coming in contact with His divinity. There is simply no other way. The Word was made flesh. The two natures of Christ are united in One Person, "without confusion, change, division, or separation" (as professed by the Council of Chalcedon of 451).

The Catholic love for the sacraments—and for sacramentals and relics and icons and statues and ceremony—therefore derives from love for God-made-man. In the First Epistle of John, the author cannot seem to find sufficient words to convey the importance of the fact that the Word was made flesh. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." John appeals to all the senses to give witness to the Incarnate God. We *saw* Him and *heard* Him and *touched* Him, he insists.

The Catholics kneeling before the raised Host at Mass worship in wonder and love the God whom they see with the "spiritual eye" of the intellect elevated by the gift of faith, the God whom they touch and taste under the appearances of Bread and Wine. The Catholic kneeling in the confessional hears Jesus say, "I absolve you of your sins," through the lips of the priest. Just as Peter encountered Christ's divinity in His humanity through the gift of faith, even so today the Catholic encounters Christ in His sacraments. The sacraments are no more an obstacle to our coming to Christ than Our Lord's humanity is a barrier to our coming to His divinity. With the eyes of faith, Peter was able to look on his friend and teacher, a carpenter from Nazareth whose family Peter knew, and declare, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Catholic looks upon the elevated Host at Mass with the eyes of faith and declares, "My Lord and my God!" The Catholic venerates the Host because he venerates Christ.

Catholics worship the Sacred Humanity of Christ that has redeemed them. This worship of Christ's Humanity reflects the most profound commitment to the truths revealed in Scripture about the nature and work of Jesus. The Word was made flesh. This man Jesus is God. As Tertullian said in the second century, "The flesh is the hinge of salvation." We can certainly understand that truth when we meditate on the Incarnation. But Tertullian is speaking also of the effects of the sacraments to bring us to our bodily resurrection in Christ.

For a variety of reasons, classical Protestant thought has usually held "the flesh" in some suspicion. It suggests that the "flesh" is something which must be overcome to reach Christ. Both Luther and Calvin railed against the "carnal Church," the Catholic Church, and called men to the "spiritual Church," their "reformed" Church. They seemed to feel an uneasiness with the radical implications of the Incarnation extending Christ's saving actions to the sacraments, a visible Church, and a hierarchical ministry stretching through time.

The hierarchical ministry, for example, is not merely incidental to the life of the Church for Catholics but essential to it. Flesh and blood men become themselves sacramental realities as they bear the authority of Christ Himself which He had passed on to His apostles. Our Lord designated one among them to be the chief shepherd to feed His "lambs" and to exercise "the power of binding and loosing." And Simon Peter passed this authority on through an unbroken "apostolic succession" to the Bishop of Rome, the Vicar of Christ. In the actions of the Pope and the legitimate successors of the apostles, believers encounter Christ Himself binding and loosing, consecrating and forgiving.

For many Protestants, however, the sacraments became merely external signs of God's promises rather than transforming encounters with Christ. In his *Of True and False Religions,* Calvin writes that "a sacrament is an external sign, by which the Lord seals on our conscience his promises of good will towards us, in order to sustain the weakness of our faith."

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The Catholic sees the sacrament as much more than that. Baptism, for example, does not communicate simply the promise of God's good will towards us, but rather by God's power radically transforms us and gives us new life. "Unless you are born again of water and the Spirit you shall not enter the Kingdom of God." For the Catholic, the water with the invocation of the Trinity is an efficacious sign that actualizes what is symbolized—the washing away of sin and a true rebirth. The Catholic has no reluctance in seeing his relationship with God in Christ being realized, not only through interior prayer, but also through prayerful eating, drinking, washing, anointing, and touching.

The realization that God brought about our salvation in time, in a particular place, in a historic Individual who could be seen, touched, and heard leads Catholics to seek to come as close as possible to that Man and to His friends and collaborators, the saints, by venerating their holy relics and the holy places where they worked God's wonders. It is undoubtedly true that the search for relics at times bordered on excess and credulity. But the motive in the search for relics was no more base or misplaced than was the motive of the hemorrhaging woman in the Gospels who reached out to touch the hem of Jesus' garment in order to be healed. From that faith-filled tactile encounter came healing and new life. The Catholic desire to encounter Christ in the sacraments, to make pilgrimages to the Holy Lands, to venerate relics of Jesus' friends is a desire to come as close as humanly possible to the Incarnate God whom Catholics love above all things.

There are undoubtedly people raised as Catholics who look on the sacraments and ceremonial of the Church and do not see there the opportunity to encounter Christ. After all, there were people of Jesus' own day who looked at Him and saw merely a carpenter's son from Nazareth and not the Christ, the Son of the living God. Some of Jesus' followers heard the words come from His very mouth: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you." But they did not believe Him. "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."

In a similar way, there are those who are raised Catholics, and who somehow never relate to the words and actions of the Mass. In fact, the liturgy of the Catholic Mass is a mosaic of Scripture; it is almost entirely *sola Scriptura*! But for some reason the words of Scripture sometimes fail to touch the hearts of those who hear them. At the Mass the worshippers stand when the Gospel is read as a gesture of reverence and respect for the words of Jesus proclaimed by the deacon or priest. But somehow the significance of this posture of respect is lost on certain members of the assembly.

Some of these individuals who have not been touched by the words of Scripture in the Mass later come to have a true conversion of heart and enter into a deep and loving relationship with Christ. This is a wonderful development over which the Father in Heaven and all the angels and saints rejoice, as should every Catholic. Sometimes this conversion takes place outside the Catholic Church. Even in that case, Catholics should rejoice. But as these individuals grow in their knowledge of Scripture and in their love for our Lord, they may, with God's grace, one day be drawn to that life of intimate encounter with Christ in the sacraments of His Catholic Church that has absolutely no parallel on this earth.

This was what drew my family and me (a Protestant minister) and many of our friends (some of whom were also Protestant ministers) to embrace the Catholic faith. It was not that we had not loved our Lord as Protestants. We had. And we loved Him deeply. Indeed, we became Catholics because we wanted to be as close to Him as possible in this life and to take full advantage of all the gifts He left us under stewardship of His authorized ministers in His Church.

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Legitimate Mothers

Carol Iannone

Contemporary feminism began some decades ago with what Betty Friedan called the "feminine mystique"—the notion that women had been trapped into thinking of full-time wife-and-mothering as their path to fulfillment. The feminine mystique went on to become the defining and energizing idea of the feminist movement, as outrage over the quantities of female talent being squandered in kitchens and scout dens took hold. In the generations after Friedan, many women would define themselves in opposition to their mothers' experience of baking cookies and serving tea with a degree from, say, Wellesley.

A Wellesley graduate who famously avoided this ignominious fate, Hillary Rodham Clinton, remarked feelingly on a recent PBS documentary that, due to restrictive definitions of femininity, America had lamentably lost the services of untold numbers of women as doctors and lawyers and judges and teachers and so on. Perhaps only the First Lady could make feminism sound like a selfless

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desire to serve, but what is more important in her remarks is that she spoke as though every woman had the ability to be a professional, and as though only professional women counted.

At the time of the publication of *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, there seemed to be so many Seven Sister graduates up to their elbows in cake mix that the many women who had taken a basic satisfaction in motherhood were overlooked and forgotten—especially women from that class for whom the alternative was being not a doctor or a lawyer or a judge but, say, a machinist. The movement seemed driven by the discontent of overeducated, upper-middle-class women and their angry daughters determined not to repeat their mothers' mistakes.

Some commentators anticipated that a division would arise between women who wanted motherhood and women who did not, but it turns out that motherhood was not to be left behind in the new feminist model. A division developed instead between the rapidly receding ideal of motherhood as a primary activity and the accelerating insistence on motherhood as one among many "life experiences."

It seems necessary to bring all this to light now because, while the insistence on motherhood as a life experience seems to be in the ascendancy (guiding all kinds of public choices and official decisions, from work policy to day care to welfare), the rapidly receding ideal of motherhood as a primary task may not have entirely flickered out, particularly among the nonprofessional classes. This still-surviving ideal of motherhood needs to be considered before we can fully understand some of the chronic problems we face at present—especially the problem of single mothers receiving public assistance.

The professional class's attitude toward these women has routinely been that no young woman would choose motherhood (especially early in life, and especially without a husband) if she had other options. We commonly hear that these "children having children," or even "babies having babies," are without hope—prompted to pregnancy by the bleakness and emptiness of their lives. A child at least gives them "someone to love," something to live for, a way to be needed and appreciated.

This is no doubt what inspired a recent experimental program for young mothers called New Chance, which served 1,408 women in ten states, and which, according to the *New York Times*, "showered" its participants with education and social services. The program was closely watched by welfare experts since its basic inspiration seemed close to many Clinton Administration initiatives.

An article in the *Christian Science Monitor*, written at an earlier stage of the program, gave details of the services offered and suggested that it was yielding some modest successes. The young mothers, aged sixteen to twenty-two, came to community centers five days a week, from nine until three. Their children generally received on-site supervision and health care. In the mornings the women studied toward their high school equivalency degrees; in the afternoons they received counseling on careers, family planning, parenting, and child development. Later in their programs, they were given training in job skills, internships related to their career choices, and further education. Each had a personal case worker to provide individual support and direction.

A later article in the *Times*, however, tucked away in the bottom corner of page sixteen, reported that the program had at last been determined to have failed. The experiment had "no effect in moving [the mothers] from welfare into the job market," the *Times* reported. "After eighteen months, those who joined the program were no more likely to be off welfare or in a job than a similar group that received no services," and about "80 percent of the mothers from both groups were still collecting welfare." The program did succeed in getting more women in the test group than in the control group to complete their high school equivalency diplomas, but this turned out to be meaningless. Both groups were still reading below eighth-grade level at the end of the eighteen months (which perhaps tells us more than we wanted to know about the value of the high school equivalency degree). And, most importantly, 57 percent of those in the test group were pregnant again after the eighteen months, while 53 percent of those in the control group were.

One reason for the failure of programs like New Chance may be that the women involved do not see motherhood through the eyes of our national elite. They see that having a child may actually be something primarily and immediately desirable, not something to avoid or postpone—not a make-do out of desperation, not an inconvenience that interferes with an education, not something to do while also advancing a career, not one of a number of life experiences, but a primary experience.

We used to see public service advertisements that tried to discourage illegitimacy by portraying the frustration and loneliness of the single mother, but these young women know better. Single motherhood is an established institution in our society by now; these women have numerous friends who have had babies out of wedlock, and they do not quite see the awful, hopeless, dead-end entrapment of public lore. If they did, they perhaps *would* be more careful, but what they see instead is many young women managing, more or less, and probably enjoying, more or less, the experience of motherhood. This may be the reason we no longer see the kind of public service campaigns that we used to; to those in the know they would look as antiquated as the old VD films that were once shown to GIs.

Of course we have all heard the discouraging sta-

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tistics connecting single motherhood to poverty, crime, limited education, and unemployment. But these statistics do not reveal a life of total desperation in each individual case. While single motherhood is a bad idea overall, it is dishonest for welfare reform critics to keep up the fiction that it is only embraced out of hopelessness or despair, or that it can only be countered by massive public programs offering greater "opportunity." In many city neighborhoods one can see briskly attentive single mothers and their offspring, shopping, lunching out, playing in the park, walking home from school, visiting the library. Recently, a number of unmarried women on public assistance (many of them already mothers several times over) managed to obtain fertility treatments on Medicaid. A news article told of the "joy" felt by a single mother when she heard that her teenage son's girlfriend was pregnant, and a husband and wife pastoral team with a radio ministry had to give a lecture on the inappropriateness of baby showers for single Christian women.

To onlookers consulting the statistics, the situation of single mothers may seem hopeless, even disastrous. But to these women, it is a real life they are living, and not some apology for a life. In fact, compared to real motherhood, the New Chance model of studying, laboring, work shopping, interning, skills training, career counseling, etc., all under the watchful eyes of a social worker, probably looks a little grim. Even "wanting someone to love" is not as desperate or illegitimate a reason for having children as it may at first sound. "I look at my children and I know I gave something to the world," a welfare mother told the *Times*. (The situation of the children may be a different story, but that is not what we are asked to consider by those who want us to pity the women's lives.)

Even so, women in the professional classes, confronted with a young single mother, imagine that the only life worth living is one very much like their own—that to live without the prospects of a major career, to give birth without completing an education, to rear a child without setting up a college fund and providing violin lessons, is to face a void. But this is simply untrue. A great many people manage to enjoy life with much less than all that, and do not feel nearly as sorry for themselves as others do for them.

None of this is to suggest that single motherhood is a good thing; in fact, its escalation is an alarming sign of how far the institutions and civilizational mechanisms of our society have been destroyed by the forces of "liberation" in recent decades. But the ascendant trivialization and denigration of motherhood by the professional classes keeps us from seeing not how "hopeless" these lives are, but, relatively speaking, how gratifying. For many women being a mother can suffice, despite what all the feminist maximizers, actualizers, and promoters of female potential and absolute self-fulfillment may think.

If it is true that illegitimacy is spreading through all levels of the population, perhaps one of the reasons is that state-supported single motherhood has been for some time the one situation in which women can actually be relatively relaxed about putting motherhood first. The idea of a nonworking wife has already become unthinkable for many middle-class men. "Welfare Mothers Have a Big Job To Do Raising Their Children," ran a defense of welfare opposing the idea that mothers on public assistance should be made to work. Who makes such an apologia for the harried middle-class mom, "juggling," "balancing," and "having it all"? Our society should rethink its ideas about motherhood, if it is serious about reducing illegitimacy. Come to think of it, it should rethink its ideas about motherhood, period.

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ON THE OTHER HAND

The Road to Bosnia

Peter L. Berger

The other day a colleague of mine, who came to America from Russia via Israel, told me a story about her son who is in the eighth grade in a renowned progressive school in Cambridge, Massachusetts (than which no community could be more progressive). The boy was puzzled over how to complete an assignment he had been given in school, to write a paper responding to the question, "What do your people believe in?" My colleague was quite annoyed and suggested, "Why don't you say, my people believe in liberal democracy!"—to which her son replied, "They would kill me if I wrote that!" My colleague commented, "You know, there is no way in which a kid in this school could identify himself simply as an American."

Then there was this conversation with a visiting scholar from Russia. She reported that she was pleased to have found some people here with whom she could speak Russian, especially one woman who only lived a short distance away. It was clear from her account that this woman was married, so I asked whether her

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friend's husband was Russian too. "Oh no," she replied, "he is a Jew." I asked, "But aren't there Russian Jews?" A perplexed look came over her face, she thought for a moment (as if this were a difficult question), then said: "No. There are Russians and there are Jews. She is Russian, he is Jewish." I observed that her remarks could be taken as anti-Semitic. "I'm not anti-Semitic," she said emphatically.

All of this made me remember something I had read many years ago. Shortly after the end of World War II a group from an American Jewish organization visiting Denmark met with an official of the government. The topic of conversation was the well-known story of how the Danish people and government spirited away to Sweden virtually the entire Jewish population of Denmark and thus saved them from the Nazis. The spokesman of the American Jewish group told the Danish government official, "We want to thank you for what you did for our people." "We didn't do it for *your* people," he replied; "we did it for *our* people."

A few years ago, well before the end of apartheid in South Africa, an acquaintance of mine, a black professor from that country, was a visiting scholar at Harvard. As soon as he arrived in late summer, he wanted to register his two children at a nearby Cambridge public school. The person in charge of registration seemed embarrassed, said that there were some technical problems, and suggested that the professor and his children should come back the following week. The next week they were told that the children could not be admitted at this school but would be assigned somewhere else, which happened to be a long bus ride away. The father, who by then was very angry, asked to speak to someone higher up and was finally seen by the school principal. The principal was very embarrassed indeed (I'm not sure that he should be given credit for this) as he explained, "You must understand my position. You see, we have now achieved the targeted racial balance in this school. If we admitted your children, it would disturb the balance." The professor observed that he came from the country of apartheid and had not expected, in liberal Massachusetts, to have his children refused admission to a school because of their race. That may or may not have aggravated the embarrassment of the principal, but it did not change his position. The children wound up at a nearby Catholic school.

Last year I happened to have some time on my hands in Amsterdam and, wandering about, came upon the museum of the city's history. A large group of school children was being led through the museum, the great majority non-white—evidently children of immigrants from the erstwhile Dutch possessions in Southeast Asia and the Netherlands Antilles. (Assuming that there was no racial segregation in Amsterdam schools, I later asked a Dutch acquaintance about this, and he opined that this must have been a class for children still learning the Dutch language.) As one would expect, much of the museum is dedicated to the golden age of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century, when the first modern capitalism flourished there and the city was arguably the commercial capital of Europe. I do not know Dutch, but I could make enough of the teacher's explanations to understand that he was speaking with much pride about this great period in the history of "our city." The children were well-behaved, and all the little brown and black faces were raised attentively to the various exhibits of Dutch glory. Of course, I had to wonder in what way these children, whose parents hailed from Java or from Curaçao, could identify with the dour Calvinist faces staring down at them from the portraits along the walls. "Our city"?

When I'm by myself in a strange place I'm prone to fantasies. I had a fantasy there and then. There are now a good many children with brown faces in Germany too, and I had just been told that, for various reasons, there had been an upsurge of anti-German feelings in Holland. My fantasy was that a little brown Dutch boy was talking to a little brown German boy, berating him for "what you did to us during the war." It occurred to me that, if such a scene could take place, both countries would have solved their immigration problem.

The United States has been an immigrant country from the beginning and for a long time could take satisfaction in its record of reasonable success in integrating into its society people from the most varied backgrounds. Today all of Western Europe is an immigrant society and all its countries are struggling with the problem of integration. What does it mean to be a black citizen of the Netherlands? A German whose native language is Turkish? A Muslim Briton? In trying to answer such questions, it is no longer clear that Europeans can learn from the United States.

The road to Bosnia is not so very long.

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Abandoning Children to Their Rights

Bruce C. Hafen and Jonathan O. Hafen

In 1989 the United Nations General Assembly adopted, without a vote, a new Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Within a year, 130 nations had accepted the CRC, and some 175 now have. The United States has not yet ratified it, but is now considering doing so.

As approvals of international human rights treaties go, this is such blinding speed that the CRC's widespread acceptance seems surprisingly uncritical—especially for a Declaration that includes an unprecedented approach to the autonomy of children. Although it restates many time-honored UN themes about children, the new CRC would also arguably alter a number of American laws affecting families and children.

That the U.S. is not yet among the adopting nations is a curious fact, since Americans took the lead in developing the CRC's unique provisions for child autonomy. American sluggishness might be explained by a traditional reluctance to adopt human rights treaties. Moreover, family law is typically reserved to the states, which complicates the process of federal Senate ratification. A more speculative possibility arises from the fact that the American legal mainstream never embraced the notion of legal autonomy for children. Some CRC advocates have nonetheless incorrectly implied that their positions reflect the current state of American law—which is unfortunate for those in the international community who relied on their claims. This raises the question whether proponents of child autonomy who have been unsuccessful in U.S. legal circles have turned to the CRC as a way of leveraging American legislatures and courts toward what can now be presented as an international vision of autonomy for children.

Whatever the reasons for the delay, the Clinton Administration announced last February that it had signed the CRC and was sending it to the Senate for ratification.

The 1989 Convention was not the first time an international organization has expressed aspirations for the world's children. The League of Nations in 1924 adopted the general principle that "mankind owes to the child the best it has to give." The United Nations adopted an impressive "Declaration on the Rights of the Child" in 1959. All three declarations laudably urge the protection and development of children and seek to improve children's health, nutrition, safety, and education.

However, the 1989 statement also charts what the UN calls "new territory" by moving beyond *protection* rights to *choice* rights for children. According to a current UN publications catalogue, the CRC offers a "new concept of separate rights for children with the Government accepting the responsibility of protecting the child from the power of parents." One proponent, Michael Jupp, says "the Convention recognizes that children should have rights identical to adults'." Thus the CRC takes a "quantum leap" beyond the 1959 Declaration by adopting and promoting "an autonomous view" of children's rights that is "more based on choice than needs" of children.

American society has long been committed to protecting and developing its children, as the existence of the nation's public schools and juvenile courts demonstrates. The concept of minority legal status has also protected children from their own temporary lack of capacity. Rather than discriminating against children, this tradition gives them advantages designed to protect them from abuse and nurture them toward maturity.

Not until the early 1970s did the first Kiddie Libbers appear, arguing for the first time that children "are autonomous individuals, entitled to the same rights as adults." This assertion relied not on new evidence that young people have adult-like capacity,

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but on the liberationist ideology that kids are people too. This ideology drew support from Supreme Court opinions in the 1960s that recognized rudimentary constitutional rights for public school students and other children.

But child autonomy claims have not really carried the day in American law. Supreme Court Justice Lewis Powell captured the collective judgment of American courts and legislatures in 1979 when he wrote that "the peculiar vulnerability of children, their inability to make critical decisions in an informed, mature manner, and the importance of the parental role in child rearing" together justify "the conclusion that the constitutional rights of children cannot be equated with those of adults."

While American law has not yet accepted the concept of legal autonomy for children, the idea that children should have more freedom has been growing in recent years, perhaps reflecting a lessening of adult responsibility for children. The UN's CRC illustrates that the movement toward increased social, even if not fully legal, autonomy for children is growing, not only in the U.S. but also internationally. Since 1989, the CRC has exported throughout the world the concept of presuming the autonomy of the individual child. As described by one proponent, the CRC's "civil rights" provisions reject the "integrative" character of the 1959 UN Declaration on Children, which had emphasized the "integration of persons into society." Instead, the CRC "expresses an 'autonomous' view of the rights of children" that provides for them "a sphere of autonomy and freedom from control rather than integration into society."

There is thus a similarity between the UN's recent thinking about child autonomy and its 1994 Cairo Conference on Population, the "core philosophy" of which George Weigel described in FIRST THINGS ("What Really Happened at Cairo," February 1995) as a "view of the human condition. . . rooted in [the] concept of the radically autonomous individual"—a concept that obscures "the importance of families rooted in stable marriages for the well-being of children."

The significance of the CRC's emphasis on child autonomy is best understood by considering the distinction between rights of *protection* and rights of *choice* for children. Protection rights, which do not depend on any minimum level of capacity, include such safeguards as the right to property, rights to physical care and security, and the right not to be imprisoned without procedural due process. Recently increased procedural protections for American children in juvenile courts, schools, and other settings are typically designed not to increase children's personal choices but to protect children against the abuses of unchecked adult discretion. Children's relative lack of adult capacity explains the need for such protections.

Choice rights, on the other hand, grant individuals the authority to make affirmative and legally binding decisions, such as voting, marrying, making contracts, exercising religious preferences, or choosing whether and how to be educated. The very concept of minority status, reflected in statutes in every American jurisdiction, denies underage children independent choices on such matters—not as a way of discriminating against them, but as one way of protecting children and society from the consequences of a child's immature choices and from exploitation by those who would take advantage of a child's vulnerability. To confer the full range of choice rights on a child is also to confer the burdens and responsibilities of adult legal status, which necessarily removes the protection rights of childhood. With the exception of abortion choices by minors found to be "mature," virtually all of the modern American children's rights cases have been concerned not with children's rights of autonomous personal choice, but with their rights to protection.

This is the background for understanding the 1989 CRC's provisions that grant children greater autonomy by extending their rights of choice—or, as CRC advocate Cynthia Price Cohen puts it, their "rights of individual personality." To be sure, these newly fashioned rights comprise but a fraction of the complete CRC, which also reflects in its fifty-four separate articles a significant degree of agreement with the conceptual and political development that has occurred throughout the field of international human rights in recent years. In addition to reaffirming such fundamental children's needs as food, clothing, and shelter, the CRC properly addresses issues of drug abuse, child neglect, a healthy environment, children in armed conflict, and the special needs of disabled children.

The CRC also clearly "acknowledges the primary role of the family and parents in the care and protection of children, and the obligation of the State to help them in carrying out these duties." Indeed, the CRC's Preamble describes the family "as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for [children's] growth and well-being." To this end, Article Five affirms "the responsibilities, rights, and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom." Article Five, however, subtly but significantly limits parental rights to those that are "consistent with the evolving capacities of the child." Parental rights are thus limited to direction "of the [children's] rights recognized in the Convention."

But the CRC also includes some novel provisions. One of these is an arguably new standard for state intervention in intact families. Among the fundamental axioms of American law is the doctrine that the parent-child relationship antedates the state just as natural individual rights antedate the state in the Constitution's political theory. Parents are not trustees who receive authority to rear their children

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through delegations of state power over children. Rather, as the Supreme Court held in distinguishing biological parents from foster parents, the natural parent-child tie is "a relationship having origins entirely apart from the power of the State," while a foster placement arranged by state agents "has its source in state law and contractual arrangements." Because of this principle, the Court has said, "the child is not the mere creature of the State," and the social structure—partly in order to limit state power—presupposes a system of family units, not just a mass of isolated individuals who all stand in the same relationship to the state.

Agents of the state in America have thus never had authority to intervene in the child-parent relationship until they establish jurisdiction through formal proceedings: divorce-related custody issues; adoptions; findings of serious parental unfitness, neglect, abuse, or abandonment; or child misbehavior severe enough to require state intervention. Article Nine of the CRC, however, provides that children may be separated from parents when "such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child." Articles Three and Eighteen add that while "parents have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child," the "best interests of the child will be [parents'] basic concern."

Does this mean that any parental care that falls short of serving the child's "best interests" is sufficiently flawed to trigger intervention? Could a child trigger state intervention merely by requesting state review of the "reasonableness" of parental conduct compared to the child's view of his or her best interests?

Some American proponents of the CRC argue that its "best interest" language applies only in a secondary way to child placement; that is, only when custody is already in issue or neglect has been established does a judge unavoidably face placement options. Others, however, see the CRC's best interests standard as a primary jurisdictional test. Two Australian lawyers, Margaret Otlowski and Martin Tsamenyi, believe that under the CRC parental rights are "subject to external scrutiny" and "may be overridden" when "the parents are *not acting in the best interests of the child*, or where the parents are *unreasonably* attempting to impose their views upon mature minors who have the capacity to make their own decisions."

This interpretation is consistent with the CRC's apparent intent to place children and parents on the same plane as co-autonomous persons in their relationship with the state. To the extent that the CRC allows such interpretations, its ambiguity risks creating a new threshold for state intervention in intact families.

So too, risks inhere in the possible preference of the CRC for subjective determinations of a child's capacity. Current American law uses an objective measure—the child's age—as a surrogate for actual determinations of mature capacity. Age limits serve as the gateway to a wide variety of activities, including rights to vote, consent to medical treatment, drive motor vehicles, marry, consume alcohol, use tobacco, and purchase pornographic material. Justice John Paul Stevens once observed that such legislation uses "chronological age" to "protect minors from the consequences of decisions they are not yet prepared to make," even though "it is perfectly obvious that such a yardstick is imprecise and perhaps even unjust in particular cases."

Some courts in recent years have experimented modestly with legal doctrines designed to reduce the power of legislative classifications and to increase reviews of individual merits. Individualized determinations do appear to offer greater fairness, but that promise can be more than offset by the inherent lack of reasoned generality—and, hence, the lack of neutrality—in subjective decisions. Thus, despite some increased judicial openness to individual variations, objective categories like marriage and minority status remain fixed in American jurisprudence.

America's most ardent advocates of child autonomy have still argued that children should be presumed capable of legally binding action until an individualized determination shows otherwise. The experience of American courts, however, reveals that in practice customized findings of maturity are not very workable. Some states, for example, allow "mature minor" women to make abortion decisions, if a judge finds them sufficiently mature. Absent a finding of maturity, the judge must determine whether the abortion is in the pregnant minor's best interest. A field study of 1,300 minors who applied for abortions under such rules in Massachusetts found that, eventually, all 1,300 received abortions. This evidently resulted from the unwillingness of judges to substitute their judgment for the actual preference of an expectant teenager, regardless of her age or psychological maturity.

Rejecting age-based classifications also undermines the parental role, because it shifts to some presumably "objective" person, like a judge, the task of determining maturity—which is, in effect, the parent-like task of supervising a child's choices. Unless the parents of such a child are demonstrably unfit, long established American juvenile law principles would prohibit shifting the basic parental role to other persons. Moreover, because judges hardly know the children whose maturity they must judge, or because "maturity" as a concept is hopelessly complex and subjective, or because so many choices (as with abortion) involve hotly debated social issues, judicial supervision can abandon children to their immaturity.

Nonetheless, the CRC would grant some children's choice rights according to "the evolving capacities" of the individual child. The general rule favoring

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parental rights in Article Five limits parental prerogatives to "a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child." Similarly, Article Twelve assures children the right to express their views and asks that those views be "given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child." Article Fourteen respects parents' rights in the sensitive area of directing the religious upbringing of their children, but again only "in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child." Paradoxically, the CRC takes this position on many choice rights despite its preference for age-based classifications in dealing with children's violations of penal laws.

A developmental approach to children's activity is vital to the process of teaching them both maturity and responsibility. But it is unclear from the CRC's language whether it simply invites decisionmakers to consider the feelings and desires of children in legally unenforceable ways or whether it advocates the formal removal of age-based classification. That very lack of clarity risks misunderstanding by readers who have little knowledge of the legal and psychological context of the CRC's language.

For instance, one CRC supporter, James Gabarino, believes "the American legal system has come to regard children as neither automatically competent nor incompetent." But whatever the meaning of psychological competence, "legal competence" is a well-established concept in American law for children as well as for the elderly and the mentally disabled. That concept determines children's legal competence on the basis of age. The CRC's developmental language reflects perfectly desirable psychological aspirations that do not (and, like hopeful but unenforceable expressions of a child's "right" to be loved, cannot) mirror legal reality.

The CRC's model of child autonomy finds its clearest expression in its "civil rights" provisions. Although these are the articles that most clearly depart from current American law, CRC advocate Robert Shepherd says they demonstrate "a more American view of rights than traditionally have been found in other international documents," focusing on "the concept of 'individual rights' as developed in U.S. constitutional law."

For example, Article Thirteen grants children "the right to freedom of expression, including the right to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers . . . through any medium of the child's choice." The CRC's proponents point out that this broad free speech grant reflects the breadth of Supreme Court rulings about student rights in the 1960s. What they fail to add is that a year before the UN adopted the 1989 Convention, the Supreme Court substantially limited its earlier rulings, broadly upholding a public school's right to control not only the curriculum, but also the extracurriculum, including the content of student newspapers and speeches in school assemblies. If Article Thirteen were taken literally in American schools, teachers and administrators could have difficulty managing core education content, let alone the larger school environment.

Articles Twenty-Eight and Twenty-Nine do urge participating countries to provide "compulsory" education that will develop "the child's personality, talents, and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential." Educational development of this kind nurtures true freedom of expression and, finally, actual autonomous capacity. But this "compulsory" model of education appears to contradict the free spirit of the other civil rights articles, requiring the reader to reconcile the competing values. The CRC might have itself attempted such reconciliation—which would have forced the drafters to work through their own philosophical ambivalence.

Article Thirteen's language about receiving "information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers" through "the medium of the child's choice" also fails, except in a vague reference to "public health or morals," to recognize the risks to children of obscenity and pornography. The Supreme Court has denounced the destructive nature of child pornography and it has upheld state laws restricting the sale of pornographic material to minors under age sixteen. The CRC does ask in Article Seventeen for media guidelines that protect children from "injurious" material and it opposes sexual abuse in Article Nineteen. But the language of Article Thirteen is written with such an unrestrained spirit that its relationship to these other articles is not clear.

Article Fifteen ensures children the right of association and peaceful assembly, subject to a few soft limits. The Supreme Court has rejected claims to associational rights in minors' curfew cases, but CRC proponents argue that this Article just extends to groups those rights of expression it grants to individual children.

Article Fourteen affirms "the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion." It respects parents' "rights and duties" to "provide direction" in this realm, but only "to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child." In this instance, as arguably in general under Article Five, the parental rights recognized by the CRC apparently extend only to a role in enforcing the rights the CRC grants to the child, without recognizing an independent parental right. The CRC's autonomy model tends to view parents as trustees of the state who have only such authority and discretion as the state may grant in order to protect the child's independent rights.

Article Fourteen also seems to reject the Supreme Court's general position that parental interests are prior to, not derived from, the state. More precisely, Article Fourteen apparently rejects the Court's long-standing position that parents have a constitutional

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right to rear their children within the parents' religious tradition. In *Yoder v. Wisconsin*, the Court affirmed an earlier case that upheld parents' rights to send their children to parochial schools as "a charter of the rights of parents to direct the religious upbringing of their children." But Article Fourteen prefers Justice Douglas' dissent in the *Yoder* case, which argued that "it is the student's judgment, not his parents', that is essential if [students are] to be masters of their own destiny." The *Yoder* majority directly rejected Douglas' autonomy-based position, but Douglas' view remains widely quoted by advocates of child autonomy.

Indeed, CRC proponents describe Douglas' position as "laying the groundwork for the CRC's explicit recognition that children's civil rights must be considered in light of [their] moral and cognitive [development]." The CRC's emphasis on "the evolving capacities of the child" in the religious context is striking, not only because it casts doubt on age-based classification, but because it does so in a context—religious liberty—in which American law has recognized parental prerogatives for a longer time and in a more fully articulated form than virtually any other parental interest.

Article Sixteen establishes child privacy rights: "No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home, or correspondence." This limited context confers little meaning on "privacy," an unfortunate omission in light of the growing complexity of privacy laws. Robert Shepherd believes this Article grants children the same "right to privacy" from which "the constitutional protections for procreation and abortion decisionmaking have come." He thinks this article confers "the right to be let alone," Justice Brandeis' 1934 phrase that now captures the general idea of autonomous personhood.

This broad sense of privacy makes no explicit allowance for the role of parents, who are unavoidably involved in a child's private world. In most contexts one could assume that a "right" to privacy runs only against the state. However, the CRC's apparent intent to give "government the responsibility of protecting the child from the power of parents" naturally raises the question whether the CRC's interest in privacy rights for children also intends to limit parental prerogatives.

The Supreme Court has recognized privacy rights for children in only two contexts, abortion and contraception. The Court has recognized that *mature* minors may choose abortions without parental consent, and that *immature* minors, as a judge may determine, are entitled to judicial reviews that may authorize abortions. But the Court's rationale for minors' abortion "privacy" arose from a pregnant girl's prospective parenthood and has no serious application to her other "choice" rights. Similarly, the Court's approach in protecting adolescent access to contraceptives derived not from a maturity-based choice right, but from the Court's desire to protect immature adolescents against the risks of pregnancy and venereal disease. Elsewhere the Court has upheld well-established public policy interests in preventing teenage pregnancy.

Still, for some advocates of adolescent choice, locating any children's right within the modern concept of privacy implies, even if the cases do not, that children may now make autonomous choices in any realm that is, well, private—which implies sexual freedom. Ironically, however, constitutional privacy in American law actually developed primarily to protect personal decisions regarding marriage and kinship, not as a means of furthering the sexual revolution outside marriage, whether for adults or for children. The Supreme Court has not yet extended constitutional "sexual rights" (as distinguished from rights to abortion or contraception) to unmarried adults, let alone to children.

Against this ambiguous background, a major risk of the CRC's reference to privacy rights for children is the implication that it supports sexual freedom for children. This risk is magnified by the claims of various adult interest groups whose core interests require protection for sexual autonomy. For example, models of medical counseling encourage physicians to be nonjudgmental. Children who need to be immunized or fitted for braces require parental consent, but advice related to sexual experience is more protected, partly because pregnant minors require special help, but also because sex seems closer to the core idea of autonomy. Public school teachers and officials are increasingly reluctant to describe adolescent sexual choices as right or wrong, both because sex education increasingly asks adults to "get real" about teen sex, and because of the growing cultural assumption that "children are capable of choosing their own morality as long as they do not commit crimes." Some wings of feminist thought argue that attempts to limit the sexual freedom of teenagers is but one more form of female repression. And the commercially based determination of public media organizations to eliminate censorship has led to public portrayals of adolescent lovemaking that were unthinkable a generation ago, and this despite the Supreme Court's view that preventing the "sexual exploitation of children constitutes a government objective of surpassing importance."

Barbara Whitehead has documented a recent change in Americans' view of adolescent sex. Adults once saw adolescence as a time for nurturing their children toward responsible behavior, so they typically helped teenagers maintain normative standards against premarital sex. Adults felt responsible for teaching young people "the competencies and credentials of adulthood before they took on the responsibilities of parenthood." As an extension of adult

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society's own sexual revolution, however, we have recently entered a new revolutionary phase in which many assume that ever-younger adolescents are presumptively autonomous and that enlightened adults will simply provide their teenagers with access to, and protection from the hazards of, ongoing sexual experiences. Yet experience shows that this hypothesis seldom works in practice, and that the contemporary assumption that adolescents can handle sexual freedom responsibly is an illusion created as much by adult preferences as by adolescent hormones.

This interpretation is reinforced by the candid admission of a team of prominent researchers on the problem of teenage pregnancy. After describing nationally increasing rates of adolescent pregnancy, the researchers, Melvin Zelnik, John F. Kanter, and Kathleen Ford, offered their view about the possibilities for reducing the rate of teenage pregnancy: "For ourselves, we prefer to cope with the consequences of early sex as an aspect of an emancipated society, rather than pay the social costs its elimination would exact." This view of adolescent autonomy is little more than a facade that serves adult interests at the expense of adolescent interests.

Within specific contexts, there are often understandable reasons various groups feel the need to defend their institutional positions without compromise. But the aggregate effect of such attitudes in this area is to load public policy-making with so many constraints that children's need for protection and sound education about sex can simply be lost amid noisy and ironic claims about the importance of children's privacy—claims that may be superficial surrogates for more fundamental claims to adult autonomy or to institutional profitability.

In general, the CRC's autonomy model ironically undermines the process of education and nurturing that every child needs to build an autonomous self. A child is not "free" to play the piano just because no physical force keeps her from walking to the piano bench. She will achieve the freedom to make music only when she has developed the capacity to obey the laws of music. Similarly, a child writing a paper in school does not have "freedom of expression" merely by being left alone at his desk. He may be free of censorship, but freedom of expression also means freedom *for* expression—having the capacity for understanding and expression. To develop real autonomy, children must submit their freedom temporarily to teachers who enhance their ability for the meaningful exercise of freedom.

But some adults who want to liberate children are not as motivated by children's interests as by their own interests—some ideological and some that merely serve adult convenience. Adults face a conflict of interest in thinking about autonomy for children. When they disengage themselves from the arduous task of rearing and teaching children in the name of increasing children's autonomy, adults' actual—even if not fully conscious—purpose may be to increase their own autonomy by freeing themselves from the burdens of providing meaningful care. Even worse, some pro-child autonomy claims are merely a smokescreen intended to protect the interests of adults who profit from such claims while indirectly exploiting the actual interests of children.

In addition, a growing clamor over legal rights for children may create the illusion that parents, teachers, and other adults owe children only what the law demands of them. The increased appearance of autonomy for children becomes then essentially the default position that results from reducing our sense of adult responsibility for children. The assertion that untutored, unguided children already enjoy all the autonomy they need may relieve adults of demanding obligations, but that assertion is ultimately a profound form of child neglect. Children cannot raise themselves.

Another major concern with the autonomy-based approach of the CRC is its failure to distinguish between state paternalism and parental paternalism. By assuming a direct relationship between children and the state, the CRC could have the effect of reducing parental commitments to childrearing while concurrently increasing the dependency of children on the state. To the extent that governmental policies foster noncommittal attitudes on the part of parents, either because parents believe they have no right to give direction to their children or because they fear that in giving them direction they might meet state-supported resistance, both the children of those families and the larger society will suffer.

For most parents, the "rights" of parenthood leave them no alternative but an assumption of parental responsibility, because that responsibility, both by nature and by law, can be assumed by no one else until the parent has failed. But when state-enforced policies undermine traditional parental rights, those same policies will inevitably undermine the assumption of parental responsibility. To undermine parental initiative is not wise when society has found no realistic alternative to it. Indeed, it may be that children have a *right* to policies that require parental accountability. Yet contemporary society reveals increasing adult indifference toward the nurturing of children. The CRC's attitude only exacerbates this tendency.

There is great irony in the observation of Akira Morita, a Japanese legal scholar who has studied the CRC's drafting process. Professor Morita found that after a decade of leisurely discussion, the CRC's hastily composed 1988 draft—particularly its emphasis on child autonomy—resulted from "a hurried compilation of the then current discussions as heavily impacted by the growing momentum toward the end of the Cold War. In other words, the 'civil rights and liberties of the child' was a child of the ideological victory of the United States over the USSR." In his view,

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the impending collapse of total state paternalism in the Soviet Union helped convince the drafters that they should accept the anti-paternalistic ideology of the CRC. The drafters thus significantly confused state paternalism with family paternalism, for the Western liberal tradition has long viewed strong familial authority as a primary check on excessive state power. Nonetheless, the anti-paternalistic flavor of the times helped lead the drafters "in the final phase of deliberations in Geneva" to "defeat an attempted resistance by the representative of West Germany who tried to defend the traditional paternalistic structure of child and family law in Western society."

It is possible, however, that the willingness of some drafters to link coercive state paternalism with a dark view of parental paternalism resulted not from confusion but from their consciously accepting an ideological critique that, as Lilian and Oscar Handlin put it, regards the nuclear family as "a microcosm of the fascist state, where the women and children are owned by, and their needs determined by, the needs of men, in a man's world." If so, such a vision of the nuclear family was probably not apparent when the CRC made its way to the floor of the UN General Assembly in 1989.

Whatever the drafters' understanding of paternalism, their document resolves too many tough issues by erring on the side of children's autonomy. This stance places the full weight of the United Nations behind the idea that parents and other adults should leave children alone, letting them speak for their own welfare and choose for themselves how their needs should be met. This approach confuses children's needs for nutrition, education, and protection (with which the UN has historically, and wisely, been concerned) with children's alleged right to make autonomous choices. The drafters evidently wished to use avant garde terminology that keeps the UN on the cutting edge of thinking on human rights, but they failed to see the distinction between the applications of that terminology to adults and its applications to children.

The standards and language of the CRC extend well beyond the current state of American law, despite the inference of some proponents to the contrary. We are concerned that members of the international community, especially those who look to the U.S. for leadership in the emerging field of children's rights, may have adopted the CRC's language without realizing that some of its key propositions and assumptions are not self-defining and are highly debatable. For example, we are told by a practicing Danish lawyer that Denmark adopted the CRC in 1991 and that the national offices that monitor child welfare and family law matters in that country now routinely defer to the CRC's language to ensure that local practice follow UN guidelines. To the extent that others follow this pattern, we hope they do so as a result of conscious reflection on the alternatives, not simply because they believe that the latest UN word on human rights as children's rights offers the best word.

The Clinton Administration views the CRC as a simple statement of "ideals and principles" designed "to promote the well-being and protect the basic rights of children throughout the world" in such areas as "health care and protection from violence"; thus it "will not give children the right to sue parents or supersede state laws dealing with the punishment of minors." The Administration's language presents the CRC as a reaffirmation of basic, even obvious, human rights, not as a conceptual or technical departure from current American law. In our view, despite its reaffirmation of many essential needs for children, and despite its admirable general invitation for the nations of the world to take children more seriously, the CRC is flawed by attitudes about autonomy that are ill-suited for children in any nation.

It is quite possible that some members of the international community have simply not understood either the CRC's language or its conceptual novelty. For example, the Vatican's early statement accepting the CRC explicitly assumed that the convention "represents the enactment of principles previously adopted" by the UN. Given the complexities of language translation in an area where nuanced phrasing and subtle legal distinctions are at the heart of the arguments, this is a believable interpretation. It is also possible that our concerns could be mitigated by the Administration's providing clarifying reservations before the Senate debate begins. In any case, a Senate debate should clarify both the CRC's intentions and its meaning, since its ideas about child autonomy originated primarily in American minds.

Clearly, in the U.S. as elsewhere, many older adolescents are quite capable of making sound lifestyle choices; far too many parents are dysfunctional; far too many children are ignored and abused; and no investment of human or political resources has greater long-range significance than investments in children. But years of serious struggling with these issues in one of the world's cultures most friendly to autonomy has not persuaded most American courts and legislatures that—short of actual neglect—state agencies (or children themselves) are better equipped than the nation's parents to assume parental roles.

Despite increasing autonomy rhetoric, the American legal system limits children's autonomy in the short run in order to maximize their development of actual autonomy in the long run. This approach also encourages development of the personal competence needed to produce an ongoing democratic society comprised of persons capable of autonomous and responsible action. To short-circuit this process by legally granting—rather than actually teaching—autonomy to children ignores the realities of education and child development to the point of abandoning children to a mere illusion of genuine autonomy. FT

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What T. S. Eliot Almost Believed

J. Bottum

What passes in the human heart is known to God alone, and the private spiritual life of T. S. Eliot may have been rich and full. But Eliot's publicly presented spirituality—the spirituality in the *Four Quartets*, *Murder in the Cathedral*, and *The Rock*—seems merely weak and strange. Not all spirituality is exuberant or bright, of course. There exists a real spirituality, like John Henry Newman's, that speŋds itself in the mad, dry attempt to make our inexact words say the exact things of faith exactly, just as there exists a real spirituality, like Gerard Manley Hopkins', that seeks the light of God most strongly in the darkness of His absence. Eliot's spirituality, however, is not precisely dry and not precisely dark; it is instead something like an exotic hothouse plant forced to a small, unlikely bloom—over-cultivated, over-nursed, and over-watched.

For an entire generation of believers Eliot stood as an icon and his faith as a watchword. Born to an age of avant garde art and thought that defined itself most clearly by its rejection of faith in God, Eliot with his gradual—and public—conversion made it respectable again for believers to believe. The respectability was not exactly intellectual, for to the avant garde's amazement there continued to be many intelligent people whose lives were organized around their faith. And the respectability was not exactly moral, for in their gossipy world the British intelligentsia knew too much about one another's private lives for Eliot to claim the authority of a moral hero. The respectability he gave to belief was instead, and more importantly, aesthetic. That a great modernist poet—the author not just of the definitive statement of the Unreal City of modernity in *The Waste Land* but of so many quotable and right lines about the abyss in "Prufrock," the "Sweeney" poems, and "The Hollow Men"—could come to believe meant that the finest expressions of human life remained available for believers.

Misreading, perhaps, the end of G. E. Moore's *Principia Ethica*, Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group claimed at least the identity of feeling and morality if not the superiority of feeling to morality. But "feeling" is an equivocal word, and the moral feeling that the Bloomsbury Group meant is not exactly (as Alasdair MacIntyre claims) an emotivism but rather a cultivated aesthetic sense, a self-confirming *feel* for opposing the finer, more delicate thoughts and things to vulgar, coarse, Victorian self-confidence. And if a man like T. S. Eliot with his obviously delicate feeling could manage to believe, then the modern failure of nerve that so many modern men and women felt might itself contain a new and properly modern—properly delicate, properly aesthetic—path to continued faith in God.

Grace exists where one finds it, and Eliot's example and real gift for turning powerful and right lines probably did help some believers at some moments during this terrible century. But his self-conscious spirituality ends only in paralysis and his delicate spirituality freezes at last faith's difficult search for understanding.

Part of the problem with Eliot's late use of Christian spirituality to fill the void of modern times is that in his early and middle poems he made the void so large. It was with "Gerontion" (1920) in his second volume of poems that Eliot first used deliberate Christian imagery: "In the juvescence of the year / Came Christ the tiger." But the Christ of "Gerontion" serves no more as the Christ of Christian faith than the Agamemnon of "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" serves as the Agamemnon of Greek legend. Since the Battle of the Books, at least, the contrast of ancients and moderns has been a staple of European literature. And when poets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries wanted to express their increasing discomfort with modern times they

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found the contrast an obvious trope. Eliot mastered the ironic use of meaningful ancient (and Shakespearian) epithets to indict meaningless modern squalor: though "Her shuttered barge" like Cleopatra's "Burned on the water all the day," still a rich and vulgar American takes her; though "Morning stirs the feet and hands / (Nausicaa and Polypheme)," still Sweeney in a "Gesture of orang-outang / Rises from the sheets in steam"; though "Gloomy Orion and the Dog / Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas," still "The person in the Spanish cape / Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees." But Eliot's use of antiquity is not new, and his use of Christianity in "Gerontion" seems an easy parallel to his ironic use of pagan myth—a parallel suggested perhaps by his ironic use of antique churchly words to indict present-day churches in "The Hippopotamus" and "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service."

And yet, "Gerontion" contains suggestions of something more than the obvious irony of the "Sweeney" poems, suggestions of something Eliot developed two years later in *The Waste Land* (1922). The poems in *Prufrock and Other Observations* (1917) make some classical and biblical allusions, but always as aloof and ironic indictments of the emptiness of the characters who speak the poems—as though the poet's own aesthetic feeling and moral sensibility somehow exempt him from that emptiness. In "Gerontion," however, the poet begins to link the allusions with one another and thereby to give them a life of their own. The richness of the past becomes as important as the poverty of the present; indeed, the reality of the past begins to be the fullest indictment of the present—an indictment that the poet begins to realize he himself does not escape.

Midway through "Gerontion," Eliot slips into a meditation on the playwrights John Webster and Cyril Tourneur:

> After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Think now
> History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
> And issues, deceives with whispering ambitions,
> Guides us by vanities. Think now
> She gives when our attention is distracted
> And what she gives, gives with such supple confusions
> That the giving famishes the craving. Gives too late
> What's not believed in, or is still believed,
> In memory only, reconsidered passion. Gives too soon
> Into weak hands, what's thought can be dispensed with
> Till the refusal propagates a fear.

In the tortured and sinister politics of post-Elizabethan England, in the tortured and sinister syntax of post-Elizabethan playwrights, Eliot seeks an "objective correlative" for tortured and sinister Europe after World War I. History, as the past contained within the present, renders the self-conscious present perpetually ironic, for history perpetually offers possibilities for belief that—the poet supposes—have become impossible for us now to believe.

"Gerontion" is a failure. One problem with the poem is that Eliot cannot find his way back from his historical excursus to the Christ-tiger who makes an unearned reappearance at the poem's end, and another problem is that the complicated politics of England between Elizabeth and the Restoration does not work well as a figure for Versailles after the war. The first problem must wait ten years for a proposed solution in "Ash-Wednesday" (1930). But the second Eliot solves, with Ezra Pound's help, in *The Waste Land.*

Too much has been said about *The Waste Land* to make original comment about it possible; it has become, like *Hamlet,* one of those central works around which criticism feeds upon itself, and everything one says about the poem must finally be about not just the poem but what has already been said about the poem. Eliot himself, with his appended notes and references, made *The Waste Land* a poem to be read in the context of prior readings of the poem. But Eliot's notes have an even more ironic purpose in the poem, for they prove the extension and richness of the past as past and thus prove the narrow poverty of the present. With the fragmented discourse and simultaneous voices of *The Waste Land* Eliot finds the objective correlative for the meaninglessness of modern life that had eluded him in "Gerontion." He finds as well, however, with the intrusion of time into the poem, the meaninglessness of modern death—the meaninglessness of his own future death, for though the poet by his creative act may stand outside the chaos he describes (the ascription of meaninglessness is, after all, an ascription of a sort of meaning), he cannot stand outside death. The poem longs for a resolution to the poet's fear of death,

> There is shadow under this red rock,
> (Come in under the shadow of this red rock),
> And I will show you something different from either
> Your shadow at morning striding behind you
> Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
> I will show you fear in a handful of dust

at the same time that it longs for a resolution to the decline of the West,

> Above the antique mantel was displayed . . .
> The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king

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So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice
And still she cried, and still the world pursues,
'Jug Jug' to dirty ears.
And other withered stumps of time
Were told upon the walls. . . .
I think we are in rats' alley
Where the dead men lost their bones.

T. S. Eliot is a poet of fragments, as Stephen Spender once said, through which run certain great and obsessive themes. And this becomes a vice in the late plays and the *Four Quartets*, for Eliot realizes his themes insufficiently to pull the fragments into a whole that will reflect the Divine simplicity and the unity of faith. But it remains the greatest virtue of *The Waste Land*, for Eliot presents the modern mind and modern city as composed of fragments from the past, "a heap of broken images," through which run great and obsessive anxieties. In "What the Thunder Said," the final section of *The Waste Land*, the anxiety with death and the anxiety with decline at last join: the fragmentation of the poet's obsessive learning and the fragmentation of the Unreal City have a single origin. What the thunder said is "Da"—but if it had said "Datta" (the Buddhist commandment to be generous), the poet and the city would have given with open hands. What the thunder said is "Da"—but if it said "Dayadhvam" (the commandment to be sympathetic) or "Damyata" (the commandment to be restrained), the "heart would have responded / Gaily." What the thunder said is that God has departed from both the poet and the city—and that death and decline alone remain. "He who was living is now dead / We who were living are now dying." The last words of the poem are not the last line's "Shantih Shantih Shantih," but the last note's dry explanation that "'The Peace which passeth understanding' is our equivalent to this word." Eliot reduces even "Shantih" to an ironic fragment, and for the poet and city alike a doomed defense alone remains: "These fragments I have shored against my ruins."

From Matthew Arnold in "Dover Beach" (1867) to Philip Larkin in "Church Going" (1955) poets have found the decay of the culture's religious faith an easy trope with which to express their melancholy sense of lost meaning. But it is a decadent trope and perhaps a wicked trope, for it acquiesces in decay at the same time that it bemoans it and it agrees to inevitability at the same time that it regrets it. Indeed, I suspect that despite the melancholy tone of "Church Going" Larkin actually wishes the utter cessation of faith would come more quickly. Even in *The Waste Land* Eliot flirts with this trope of lost faith: "Who is the third who walks always beside you?" But he knows philosophy too well to suppose that we could somehow find a meaning for lost meaning, somehow understand why we seem no longer to understand. The reduction of faith in God to an age in history is an attempt to understand faith by surmounting faith, by making the history of faith in God an event transparent to a superior historical understanding. But if the purpose of performing the reduction is to explain why the world no longer seems essentially intelligible, then we lack an explanation for why history should manage to find the age of faith historically intelligible. If the absence of faith in God makes everything meaningless, then even that meaninglessness must be meaningless.

"The Hollow Men" (1925) forms a coda to *The Waste Land*, for in "The Hollow Men" Eliot purifies in the desert's dry furnace his obsessive anxiety with death and his obsessive anxiety with decline. But he purifies as well his knowledge of the single origin of these anxieties in the absence, not exactly of faith, but of the God in Whom faith would believe—if only we had faith. The philosophically trained Eliot sees that without God, nothing may be beautiful, or true, or good. And here in "The Hollow Men," two years before he entered into Christian communion (on June 29, 1927), Eliot makes the mistake that cripples the spirituality of all his later work.

I must be careful to say exactly what I mean, for certain critics, Marxist or Freudian or postmodernist, dismiss Eliot's late spirituality precisely because it makes an attempt at spirituality—as though Eliot, after looking deep into the abyss in *The Waste Land*, had closed his eyes in horror and stumbled back into a childish and outdated faith in a childish and outdated God. What I mean instead is that I think Eliot never did truly believe and that his poetry is not about faith's wait for God but about the hollow man's wait for faith. Of course, he probably did believe, and many accounts of personal encounters with the poet describe the deep humility and sincerity of his faith. What we encounter in his late poetry, however, is a profound confusion of faith with a brilliant and learned man's rational understanding that he needs to have faith. It may not have been a confusion in his personal life of prayer, but it is an obvious confusion in his published poetry. And it is still more obvious in his social criticism in *The Idea of A Christian Society* and *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture*. Even at his most devout, Eliot sees religion instrumentally—not as Plato's "Noble Lie," of course, instilled in the simple people but disbelieved by the elite, but as a sort of "Noble Truth," instilled in the simple people so that the society may continue but believed in a delicate, ironic, and aesthetic way by the elite. In the anglophilia, misjudged irony, and grotesque delicacy of the worst line Eliot ever wrote—the Magi who have seen the Christ-child reporting, "it was (you may say) satisfactory"—we encounter a spirituality so crippled by its self-consciousness that it testifies only to a mistake in the poet's understanding of faith.

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And the mistake originates in the philosophical moves Eliot makes in "The Hollow Men" and extends in "Ash-Wednesday." The failure of modernity rests on the misguided attempt to found philosophical certainty on the self's consciousness of itself, and Eliot rightly sees modernity's failure. But his answer is to force himself to rise to consciousness of his self-consciousness—and then, when he finds that selflessness is not found there, to force himself to rise to consciousness of his self-consciousness of his self-consciousness—and then, when he finds that selflessness is not found there, to force himself to rise . . . —and then. . . . St. Augustine walked this path in the *Confessions*, and it drove him mad. The notion seems to be that, because we are finite, we cannot (in the real psychology of thought) follow self-consciousness to its apparent infinity; we cannot be infinitely self-conscious. Eventually, at the limit of our thought, we must arrive at a consciousness of which we cannot be self-conscious. Eventually we must arrive at a pure, selfless act of thought that may thereby think the true philosophical foundation of the self.

The path of self-consciousness, however, may be walked only if desire is stronger than reason, only if the will goes on longer than the intellect. The thinker who grows tired and leaps to the conclusion of the apparent infinity of self-consciousness has let reason triumph over weak desire. Augustine falls further and further into self-willed madness as he advances further and further into self-willed self-consciousness, and at last (in a garden as the *Confessions* tells the story) he converts by the grace of God from madness to that pure and selfless act he sought. But it is a pure and selfless act of *will* and not of intellect. Augustine becomes an unthinking, irrational, and motiveless desire for the Will of God. And when a child's voice—saying, "Take up and read"—wafts over the garden wall, Augustine drifts as gently as a leaf across the garden and over to the table where he finds the letters of St. Paul.

Augustinian voluntarism provides a philosophical support for St. Augustine's conversion that rationalism could never provide. F. H. Bradley, on whom T. S. Eliot concentrated his philosophical studies at Harvard, found his dialectical idealism—his rational Hegelianism—break down at exactly this point. If the fundamental instrument of the human search for the Divine is the intellect, if the mystical experience is the Aristotelian identity of self-thought thinker with self-thinking thought, then only God could ever arrive at faith. Hegel would be exactly right: the subjective will, because irrational, would be objectively useless and unknowable; history would be the story not of individuals but of God Himself coming in history to freedom, rationality, and self-consciousness. Kierkegaard could not stomach the idea, and F. H. Bradley (at least in a famous passage criticizing Matthew Arnold) apparently could not either. "How can the human-divine ideal ever be my will?" asks Bradley.

> The answer is, Your will it can never be as the will of your private self, so that your private self should become wholly good. To that self you must die, and by faith be made one with that ideal. You must resolve to give up your will, as the mere will of this or that man, and you must put your whole self, your entire will, into the will of the divine. That must be your one self, as it is your true self; that you must hold to both with thought and will, and all other you must renounce.

With the demand that by an act of will we give up our will, Bradley reaches toward the Augustinian answer. But Eliot's comment on this passage—"The distinction is not between a 'private self' or a 'higher self,' it is between the individual as himself and no more, a mere numbered atom, and the individual in communion with God"—reveals the extent to which the poet has missed it. The intellect remains for Eliot the organ of faith, just as rationalism (or a sort of rational recognition of the need for supra-rationalism) remains the philosophical support for the search for faith. And the rational self becomes for Eliot more and more attenuated as it walks the path of self-consciousness, more and more ironic, more and more delicate, more and more aesthetic, more and more vague. The poet of precision in "Prufrock" becomes the poet for whom even precision serves abstraction in the *Four Quartets*. Eliot remained intelligent, of course; if anything, he grew more intelligent as he grew older. His voice deepened as his lines grew denser, and he dropped the boyish trick of using unusual words for their effect as unusual. But he could not find in poetry the faith in God that he saw so clearly he required.

It is not surprising, then, that "Ash-Wednesday" should be the most unified and perfect of the poems after Eliot's conversion. In an essay that appeared shortly before *The Waste Land*, Eliot claimed that the metaphysical poets John Donne and George Herbert "feel their thought as immediately as the odor of a rose. . . . A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility." In "Ash-Wednesday" the thought is still new to Eliot—the thought that knowledge of the need for faith might be itself a kind of faith if only it were felt deeply enough, if only it were experienced deeply enough. And in "Ash-Wednesday" the thought is felt and experienced deeply. "Ash-Wednesday" is a poem not so much about God as prayer for God, and not so much about prayer as about the effort of the poet to put himself in the attitude of prayer. The stuttering fragmentation of lines, developed in "The Hollow Men" to suggest

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frustrated incompletion, Eliot utterly reverses in "Ash-Wednesday" to suggest consummated completion: just as immediately beyond the spoken line waits the unspoken consummation the hearer expects to hear, so immediately beyond the spoken poem waits the unspoken consummation of faith.

> Because I do not hope to turn again
> Because I do not hope
> Because I do not hope to turn
> . . .
> Lord I am not worthy
> Lord I am not worthy
> but speak the word only.

The experience of his new thought modifies Eliot's sensibility, and there shines through the lenten dark of "Ash-Wednesday" a joy in the poetic craft that was missing from "The Hollow Men."

But the joy fades as the thought grows stale and hardens into an established position. Eliot's spirituality does not deepen as time goes by, and portions of the Christian workers' chants in the choruses from *The Rock* (1934) have the joyless feeling found elsewhere only in 1930s socialist workers' declarations of communal joy in work. Eliot never lost his power to turn quotable and right lines:

> And the wind shall say: "Here were decent
> godless people:
> Their only monument the asphalt road
> And a thousand lost golf balls."

But in the choruses from *The Rock* the good lines all glibly indict the lack of other people's faith rather than declare faith's presence in the poet. And lines like "I journeyed to London, to the timekept City, / Where the River flows, with foreign flotations" seem merely weak echoes of the Unreal City in *The Waste Land*. The immediate and personal feeling of "Ash-Wednesday" becomes didactic generalization in *The Rock*, and the confusion of faith with the knowledge of the need for faith becomes established fact.

There is a certain kind of intelligence—a kind of quickness and skill at manipulating ideas at a certain middle level of abstraction—that good poetry does not necessarily require. Neither Tennyson in the nineteenth century (according to a famous gibe by W. H. Auden) nor John Berryman in the twentieth impresses the reader with his intelligence; we read Tennyson and Berryman for their language and for their profundity at higher and lower levels of abstraction than intelligence commands. Matthew Arnold is a critic of commanding intelligence, but his struggle to divorce the critical function from the poetic is a struggle to divorce intelligence from poetry (a divorce that reaches its decadent completion in the simplicity, power, and stupidity of the poetry of the highly intelligent A. E. Housman). Eliot's long quarrel with Arnold about the function of criticism is finally a quarrel about maintaining a place for intelligence in poetry. And what constantly impresses the reader is the intelligence in Eliot's criticism and poetry alike. Eliot is smarter than we are, better read, and more thoughtful.

This is the explanation, I think, for his near success at presenting Christian spirituality in *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935). Eliot had read and thought seriously about Augustine and Thomas More. He had read and thought seriously about Donne, Herbert, and Dante (especially Dante—unlike any other great English critic, Eliot returns to Dante as often as he returns to Shakespeare). Eliot knows, in other words, what he would say if only he had faith, if only he lived in a world where faith was the given and the struggle was for understanding. And in the verse-drama of *Murder in the Cathedral*, in the voice of Thomas Becket seeking to purify his motives for accepting martyrdom, Eliot gets to say it:

> I have had a tremor of bliss, a wink of heaven, a
> whisper,
> And I would no longer be denied; all things
> Proceed to a joyful consummation.

With the novelty of a new poetic form, with the ability to speak in an actual believer's intelligent voice and consequent freedom from having to speak in his own, Eliot gets to say what he would have said if only he believed. And he says it beautifully, simply, and with real grace. But in his attempt to make the play topical, in the changed tone of the murderers' speeches to the audience, for instance, Eliot actually succeeds only in reminding us that the murder of Becket is not topical (in any immediate social or political sense) and that Becket's voice is not Eliot's.

When the war put a stop to productions of new dramas, Eliot began to work again in the poetic style he had developed in "Burnt Norton" (1935), composing the last three of the *Four Quartets*: "East Coker" (1940), "The Dry Salvages" (1941), and "Little Gidding" (1942). Perhaps the increased anxiety with death in a man growing older explains the return Eliot makes to the poetic analysis of time he had begun in "Gerontion"—an analysis that characterizes the quartets from the famous beginning of the first,

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in time future,
> And time future contained in time past.
> If all time is eternally present
> All time is unredeemable

to the brilliant conclusion of the last,

> The moment of the rose and the moment of the
> yew-tree

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Are of equal duration. A people without
history
Is not redeemed from time, for history is a
pattern
Of timeless moments. So, while the light fails
On a winter's afternoon, in a secluded chapel
History is now and England.

It cannot explain, however, the calm that also characterizes the *Four Quartets*. The years brought to Eliot a practiced ease and naturalness in thinking in the patterns of Christian thought. Sometimes the voice becomes didactic (as it was in the fifth section of "Ash-Wednesday"), and sometimes the old sneer at the modern world breaks through. But the voice of the *Four Quartets* remains mostly a voice of calm but deep humility attempting with great and studied care to do justice both to the reality of temporal experience and to the reality of the atemporal Divine.

The poet knows history's reality, but the manner of its reality he finds difficult to describe, for everything that has reality must be present in some way and history presents itself in old traditions, old places, and old books—history presents itself in dissociated fragments whose purpose and unity we cannot immediately discern. Memory, especially when we grow old, presents our own past in this same way: as sudden and dissociated memories—as the poet remembers—of the dust on a rose bowl, of a river, of the passengers on a train. If the past were present to us in some sort of formal pattern, we might have sufficient knowledge to understand our present life and future death. But neither history nor memory presents the past in a patterned way, and the present lacks what would be necessary for us to comprehend it.

In certain moments and in certain places, however, and without explanation, time opens up for us in a flood of associations from history and memory. For all that it is temporal, this experience seems not so much an experience of being in time as an experience of being outside time—of being in a Now in which great stretches of time are simultaneously present. Like Proust, Eliot is careful and precise in his descriptions of such experiences. But unlike Proust, Eliot is careful to remain outside them, for his purpose is not to invest these "spots of time" (as Wordsworth called them) with mystical significance but to develop in them a metaphor for what the mystical enfolding of all time in God's Eternal Now would be like.

A tone of detachment pervades certain passages in the *Four Quartets*: in "East Coker" where Eliot puts the metaphor of Christ the wounded surgeon, in "The Dry Salvages" where he mocks augury, in "Little Gidding" where he transforms German dive-bombers into the Pentecostal descent of the Holy Spirit. And this detachment originates finally in Eliot's desire to turn experience into metaphor. The progress of the artist, Eliot wrote when he was younger, is "a continual extinction of personality." The poet must not experience his experiences; he must stand self-consciously outside experience in order to watch himself experience. And in the *Four Quartets* the self-conscious poet stands outside his temporal experiences in order to find in them a metaphor for the atemporal he has not experienced. The fundamental experience in the *Four Quartets*—that experience to which all other experiences are ordered as metaphors—Eliot always describes in the conditional or the subjunctive or the future.

And all shall be well and
All manner of things shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.

The metaphors work not properly as metaphors for faith, however, but as metaphors for what the mystical experience would be like if only we could have it. Eliot still demands knowledge, albeit a supra-rational knowledge, and still demands that faith be like knowledge. The language of mysticism—the language he borrowed from such Christian mystics as Julian of Norwich, who used it to describe the point where irrational faith gave way to supra-rational knowledge—Eliot uses to describe instead the point where his rational knowledge would give way to irrational faith. He has confused the experience of faith with the experience of God—or at least he has confused his own waiting for faith with the faithful's waiting for God.

I said to my soul, be still, and wait without
hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing;
wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing;
there is yet faith
But the faith and love and hope are all in the
waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for
thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the
stillness the dancing.

This is not faith's difficult search for understanding, but understanding's impossible search for faith. And all that remains for the poet is a delicate, aesthetic, self-conscious almost-spirituality—a detached and wistful watching of himself, watching himself, watching. FT

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Physics and the Mind of God

The Templeton Prize Address

Paul Davies

It is both an honor and a pleasure for me to speak in this world-famous Abbey, just a few metres from the remains of Isaac Newton. Along with Einstein and Darwin, Newton is one of the few scientists known to almost every member of the population. He is one of the great heroes of my own discipline, physics, even if his career as a civil servant left a lot to be desired.

It was Newton, Galileo, and their contemporaries who created science as we know it, three centuries ago. Today we take the scientific method of enquiry so much for granted that few people stop to think how astonishing it is that science works.

I was fascinated to learn that one of the judges for the Templeton Prize was Baroness Thatcher. This is in fact the second time she has been involved in giving me a prize. The first occasion was in 1962, at the Speech Day of Woodhouse Grammar School in North Finchley, when she presented me with a copy of Norton's Star Atlas for doing well in my O level exams. I doubt if her Ladyship recalls the encounter, but I can trace my own decision to become a scientist more or less to that event.

Like all school pupils, I learned science as a set of procedures that would reveal how nature works, but I never questioned *why* we were able to do this thing called science so successfully. It was only after a long career of research and scholarship that I began to appreciate just how deep scientific knowledge is, and how incredibly privileged we are to be able to unlock the secrets of nature in such a powerful way.

Of course, science did not spring ready-made into the minds of Newton and his colleagues. They were strongly influenced by two longstanding traditions that pervaded European thought. The first was Greek philosophy. Most ancient cultures were aware that the universe is not completely chaotic and capricious: there is a definite order in nature. The Greeks believed that this order could be understood, at least in part, by the application of human reasoning. They maintained that physical existence was not absurd, but rational and logical, and therefore in principle intelligible to us. They discovered that some physical processes had a hidden mathematical basis, and they sought to build a model of reality based on arithmetical and geometrical principles.

The second great tradition was the Judaic worldview, according to which the universe was created by God at some definite moment in the past and ordered according to a fixed set of laws. The Jews taught that the universe unfolds in a unidirectional sequence—what we now call linear time—according to a definite historical process: creation, evolution, and dissolution. This notion of linear time—in which the story of the universe has a beginning, a middle, and an end—stands in marked contrast to the concept of cosmic cyclicity, the pervading mythology of almost all ancient cultures. Cyclic time—the myth of the eternal return—springs from mankind's close association with the cycles and rhythms of nature, and remains a key component in the belief systems of many cultures today. It also lurks just beneath the surface of the Western mind, erupting occasionally to infuse our art, our folklore, and our literature.

A world freely created by God, and ordered in a particular, felicitous way at the origin of a linear time, constitutes a powerful set of beliefs, and was taken up by both Christianity and Islam. An essential element of this belief system is that the universe does not *have* to be as it is: it could have been otherwise. Einstein once said that the thing that most interested him is whether God had any choice in His creation. According to the Judeo-Islamic-Christian tradition,

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the answer is a resounding yes.

Although not conventionally religious, Einstein often spoke of God, and expressed a sentiment shared, I believe, by many scientists, including professed atheists. It is a sentiment best described as a reverence for nature and a deep fascination for the natural order of the cosmos. If the universe did not have to be as it is, of necessity—if, to paraphrase Einstein, God did have a choice—then the fact that nature is so fruitful, that the universe is so full of richness, diversity, and novelty, is profoundly significant.

Some scientists have tried to argue that if only we knew enough about the laws of physics, if we were to discover a final theory that united all the fundamental forces and particles of nature into a single mathematical scheme, then we would find that this superlaw, or theory of everything, would describe the only logically consistent world. In other words, the nature of the physical world would be entirely a consequence of logical and mathematical necessity. There would be no choice about it. I think this is demonstrably wrong. There is not a shred of evidence that the universe is logically necessary. Indeed, as a theoretical physicist I find it rather easy to imagine alternative universes that are logically consistent, and therefore equal contenders for reality.

It was from the intellectual ferment brought about by the merging of Greek philosophy and Judeo-Islamic-Christian thought that modern science emerged, with its unidirectional linear time, its insistence on nature's rationality, and its emphasis on mathematical principles. All the early scientists, like Newton, were religious in one way or another. They saw their science as a means of uncovering traces of God's handiwork in the universe. What we now call the laws of physics they regarded as God's abstract creation: thoughts, so to speak, in the mind of God. So in doing science, they supposed, one might be able to glimpse the mind of God—an exhilarating and audacious claim.

In the ensuing three hundred years, the theological dimension of science has faded. People take it for granted that the physical world is both ordered and intelligible. The underlying order in nature—the laws of physics—are simply accepted as given, as brute facts. Nobody asks where they come from; at least they do not do so in polite company. However, even the most atheistic scientist accepts as an act of faith that the universe is not absurd, that there is a rational basis to physical existence manifested as a lawlike order in nature that is at least in part comprehensible to us. So science can proceed only if the scientist adopts an essentially theological worldview.

It has become fashionable in some circles to argue that science is ultimately a sham, that we scientists read order into nature, not out of nature, and that the laws of physics are our laws, not nature's. I believe this is arrant nonsense. You would be hard-pressed to convince a physicist that Newton's inverse square law of gravitation is a purely cultural concoction. The laws of physics, I submit, *really exist* in the world out there, and the job of the scientist is to uncover them, not invent them. True, at any given time, the laws you find in the textbooks are tentative and approximate, but they mirror, albeit imperfectly, a really existing order in the physical world. Of course, many scientists do not recognize that in accepting the reality of an order in nature—the existence of laws "out there"—they are adopting a theological world view. Ironically, one of the staunchest defenders of the reality of the laws of physics is the American physicist Steven Weinberg, a sort of apologetic atheist who, though able to wax lyrical about the mathematical elegance of nature, nevertheless felt compelled to pen the notorious words, "The more the universe seems comprehensible, the more it also seems pointless."

Let us accept, then, that nature really is ordered in a mathematical way—that "the book of nature," as Galileo said, "is written in mathematical language." Even so, it is easy to imagine an ordered universe that nevertheless remains utterly beyond human comprehension, due to its complexity and subtlety. For me, the magic of science is that we *can* understand at least part of nature—perhaps in principle all of it—using the scientific method of enquiry. It is utterly astonishing that we human beings can do this—why should the rules on which the universe runs be accessible to humans?

The mystery is all the greater when one takes into account the cryptic character of the laws of nature. When Newton saw the apple fall, he saw a falling apple. He did not see a set of differential equations that link the motion of the apple to the motion of the moon. The mathematical laws that underlie physical phenomena are not apparent to us through direct observation; they have to be painstakingly extracted from nature using arcane procedures of laboratory experiment and mathematical theory. The laws of nature are hidden from us, and are revealed only after much labor. The late Heinz Pagels—another atheistic physicist—described this by saying that the laws of nature are written in a sort of cosmic code, and that the job of the scientist is to crack the code and reveal the message—nature's message, God's message, take your choice, but not *our* message. The extraordinary thing is that human beings have evolved such a fantastic code-breaking talent. This is the wonder and the magnificence of science: we can use it to decode nature and discover the secret laws the universe follows.

Many people want to find God in the creation of the universe, in the big bang that started it all off. They imagine a Superbeing who deliberates for

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all eternity, then presses a metaphysical button and produces a huge explosion. I believe this image is entirely misconceived. Einstein showed us that space and time are *part* of the physical universe, not a preexisting arena in which the universe happens. Cosmologists are convinced that the big bang was the coming-into-being, not just of matter and energy, but of space and time as well. Time itself began with the big bang. If this sounds baffling, it is by no means new. Already in the fifth century St. Augustine proclaimed that "the world was made with time, not in time." According to James Hartle and Stephen Hawking, this coming-into-being of the universe need not be a supernatural process, but could occur entirely naturally, in accordance with the laws of quantum physics, which permit the occurrence of genuinely spontaneous events.

The origin of the universe, however, is hardly the end of the story. The evidence suggests that in its primordial phase the universe was in a highly simple, almost featureless state: perhaps a uniform soup of subatomic particles, or even just expanding empty space. All the richness and diversity of matter and energy we observe today has emerged since the beginning in a long and complicated sequence of self-organizing physical processes. The laws of physics not only permit a universe to originate spontaneously, but they encourage it to organize and complexify itself to the point where conscious beings emerge who can look back on the great cosmic drama and reflect on what it all means.

Now you may think I have written God entirely out of the picture. Who needs a God when the laws of physics can do such a splendid job? But we are bound to return to that burning question: Where do the laws of physics come from? And why *those* laws rather than some other set? Most especially: Why a set of laws that drives the searing, featureless gases coughed out of the big bang toward life and consciousness and intelligence and cultural activities such as religion, art, mathematics, and science?

If there is a meaning or purpose to existence, as I believe there is, we are wrong to dwell too much on the originating event. The big bang is sometimes referred to as "the creation," but in truth nature has never *ceased* to be creative. This ongoing creativity, which manifests itself in the spontaneous emergence of novelty and complexity, and organization of physical systems, is permitted through, or guided by, the underlying mathematical laws that scientists are so busy discovering.

Now the laws of which I speak have the status of timeless eternal truths, in contrast to the physical states of the universe that change with time and bring forth the genuinely new. So we here confront in physics a reemergence of the oldest of all philosophical and theological debates: the paradoxical conjunction of the eternal and the temporal. Early Christian thinkers wrestled with the problem of time. Is God within the stream of time, or outside of it? How can a truly timeless God relate in any way to temporal beings such as ourselves? But how can a God who relates to a changing universe be considered eternal and unchangingly perfect?

Physics has its own variations on this theme. In our century, Einstein showed us that time is not simply "there" as a universal and absolute backdrop to existence—it is intimately interwoven with space and matter. As I have mentioned, time is revealed to be an integral part of the physical universe; indeed, it can be warped by motion and gravitation. Clearly something that can be changed in this manner is not absolute, but a contingent part of the physical world.

In my own field of research—called quantum gravity—a lot of attention has been devoted to understanding how time itself could have come into existence in the big bang. We know that matter can be created by quantum processes. There is now a general acceptance among physicists and cosmologists that space-time can also originate in a quantum process. According to the latest thinking, time might not be a primitive concept at all, but something that has "congealed" from the fuzzy quantum ferment of the big bang, a relic, so to speak, of a particular state that froze out of the fiery cosmic birth.

If it is the case that time is a contingent property of the physical world rather than a necessary consequence of existence, then any attempt to trace the ultimate purpose or design of nature to a *temporal* Being or Principle seems doomed to failure. While I do not wish to claim that physics has solved the riddle of time—far from it—I do believe that our advancing scientific understanding of time has illuminated the ancient theological debate in important ways. I cite this topic as just one example of the lively dialogue that is continuing between science and theology.

A lot of people are hostile to science because it demystifies nature. They prefer the mystery. They would rather live in ignorance of the way the world works and our place within it. For me, the beauty of science is *precisely* the demystification, because it reveals just how truly wonderful the physical universe really is. It is impossible to be a scientist working at the frontier without being awed by the elegance, ingenuity, and harmony of the lawlike order in nature. In my attempts to popularize science, I am driven by the desire to share my own sense of excitement and awe with the wider community; I want to tell people the good news. The fact that we are able to do science, that we can comprehend the hidden laws of nature, I regard as a gift of immense significance. Science, properly conducted, is a wonderfully enriching and humanizing enterprise. I cannot believe that using this gift called science—using it wisely, of course—is wrong. It is good that we should know.

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So where is God in this story? Not especially in the big bang that starts the universe off, nor meddling fitfully in the physical processes that generate life and consciousness. I would rather that nature can take care of itself. The idea of a God who is just another force or agency at work in nature, moving atoms here and there in competition with physical forces, is profoundly uninspiring. To me, the true miracle of nature is to be found in the ingenious and unswerving lawfulness of the cosmos, a lawfulness that permits complex order to emerge from chaos, life to emerge from inanimate matter, and consciousness to emerge from life, without the need for the occasional supernatural prod; a lawfulness that produces beings who not only ask great questions of existence, but who, through science and other methods of enquiry, are even beginning to find answers.

You might be tempted to suppose that any old ragbag of laws would produce a complex universe of some sort, with attendant inhabitants convinced of their own specialness. Not so. It turns out that randomly selected laws lead almost inevitably either to unrelieved chaos or boring and uneventful simplicity. Our own universe is poised exquisitely between these unpalatable alternatives, offering a potent mix of freedom and discipline, a sort of restrained creativity. The laws do not tie down physical systems so rigidly that they can accomplish little, but neither are they a recipe for cosmic anarchy. Instead, they encourage matter and energy to develop along pathways of evolution that lead to novel variety—what Freeman Dyson has called the principle of maximum diversity: that in some sense we live in the most interesting possible universe.

Scientists have recently identified a regime dubbed "the edge of chaos," a description that certainly characterizes living organisms, where innovation and novelty combine with coherence and cooperation. The edge of chaos seems to imply the sort of lawful freedom I have just described. Mathematical studies suggest that to engineer such a state of affairs requires laws of a very special form. If we could twiddle a knob and change the existing laws, even very slightly, the chances are that the universe as we know it would fall apart, descending into chaos. Certainly the existence of life as we know it, and even of less elaborate systems such as stable stars, would be threatened by just the tiniest change in the strengths of the fundamental forces. The laws that characterize our actual universe, as opposed to an infinite number of alternative possible universes, seem almost contrived—fine-tuned, some commentators have claimed—so that life and consciousness may emerge. To quote Dyson again: it is almost as if "the universe knew we were coming." I cannot prove to you that this is design, but whatever it is it is certainly very clever.

Now some of my colleagues embrace the same scientific facts as I, but deny any deeper significance. They shrug aside the breathtaking ingenuity of the laws of physics, the extraordinary felicity of nature, and the surprising intelligibility of the physical world, accepting these things as a package of marvels that just happens to be. But I cannot do this. To me, the contrived nature of physical existence is just too fantastic for me to take on board as simply "given." It points forcefully to a deeper underlying meaning to existence. Some call it purpose, some design. These loaded words, which derive from human categories, capture only imperfectly what it is that the universe is about. But that it is about something, I have absolutely no doubt.

Where do we human beings fit into this great cosmic scheme? Can we gaze out into the cosmos, as did our remote ancestors, and declare: "God made all this for us"? I think not. Are we then but an accident of nature, the freakish outcome of blind and purposeless forces, incidental by-product of a mindless, mechanistic universe? I reject that, too. The emergence of life and consciousness, I maintain, are written into the laws of the universe in a very basic way. True, the actual physical form and general mental make-up of Homo sapiens contain many accidental features of no particular significance. If the universe were rerun a second time, there would be no solar system, no Earth, and no people. But the emergence of life and consciousness somewhere and somewhen in the cosmos is, I believe, assured by the underlying laws of nature. The origin of life and consciousness were not interventionist miracles, but nor were they stupendously improbable accidents. They were, I believe, part of the natural outworking of the laws of nature, and as such our existence as conscious enquiring beings springs ultimately from the bedrock of physical existence—those ingenious, felicitous laws. That is the sense in which I wrote in *The Mind of God*: "We are truly meant to be here." I mean "we" in the sense of conscious beings, not Homo sapiens specifically. Thus although we are not at the center of the universe, human existence does have a powerful wider significance. Whatever the universe as a whole may be about, the scientific evidence suggests that we, in some limited yet ultimately still profound way, are an integral part of its purpose.

How can we test these ideas scientifically? One of the great challenges to science is to understand the nature of consciousness in general and human consciousness in particular. We still have no clue how mind and matter are related, or what process led to the emergence of mind from matter in the first place. This is an area of research that is attracting considerable attention at present, and for my part I intend to pursue my own research in this field. I expect that when we do come to understand how consciousness fits into the physical universe, my contention that mind is an emergent and in principle predictable

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product of the laws of the universe will be borne out.

Moreover, if I am right that the universe is fundamentally creative in a pervasive and continuing manner, and that the laws of nature encourage matter and energy to self-organize and self-complexify to the point that life and consciousness emerge naturally, then there will be a universal trend or directionality towards the emergence of great complexity and diversity. We might then expect life and consciousness to exist throughout the universe. That is why I attach such importance to the search for extraterrestrial organisms, be they bacteria on Mars or advanced technological communities on the other side of the galaxy. The search may prove hopeless—the distances and numbers are certainly daunting—but it is a glorious quest. If we *are* alone in the universe, if the Earth is the only life-bearing planet among countless trillions, then the choice is stark. Either we are the product of a unique supernatural event in a universe of profligate over-provision, or else an accident of mind-numbing improbability and irrelevance. On the other hand, if life and mind are universal phenomena, if they are written into nature at its deepest level, then the case for an ultimate purpose to existence would be compelling.

It is often pointed out that people are increasingly turning away from the established religions. However, it remains as true as ever that ordinary men and women yearn for some sort of deeper meaning to their lives, what is sometimes loosely referred to as a "spiritual" aspect. Our secular age has led many people to feel demoralized and disillusioned, alienated from nature, regarding their existence as a pointless charade in an indifferent, even hostile, universe, a meaningless three-score years and ten on a remote planet wandering amid the vastness of an uncaring cosmos. Many of our social ills can be traced to the bleak worldview that three hundred years of mechanistic thought have imposed on us—a worldview in which human beings are presented as irrelevant observers of nature rather than an integral part of the natural order. Some may indeed recoil from this philosophy and find comfort in ancient wisdom and revered texts that place mankind at the pinnacle of creation and the center of the universe. Others choose to put their faith in so-called New Age mysticism, or resort to bizarre religious cults.

I would like to suggest an alternative. We have to find a framework of ideas that provides ordinary people with some broader context to their lives than just the daily round, a framework that links them to each other, to nature, and to the wider universe in a meaningful way, that yields a common set of principles around which peoples of all cultures can make ethical decisions yet remains honest in the face of scientific knowledge; indeed, that celebrates that knowledge alongside other human insights and inspirations. The scientific enterprise as I have presented it may not return human beings to the center of the universe, it may reject the notion of miracles other than the miracle of nature itself, but it does not make human beings irrelevant either. A universe in which the emergence of life and consciousness is seen, not as a freak set of events, but fundamental to its lawlike workings, is a universe that can truly be called our home.

I believe that mainstream science, if we are brave enough to embrace it, offers the most reliable path to knowledge about the physical world. I am certainly not saying that scientists are infallible, and neither am I suggesting that science should be turned into a latter-day religion. But I do think that if religion is to make real progress it cannot ignore the scientific culture; nor should it be afraid to do so, for as I have argued, science reveals just what a marvel the universe is.

If religion is to progress it must confront modern scientific thought. Over the years I have enjoyed fruitful discussions on science and religion with theologians of varying persuasions—behind closed doors. What has most impressed me about my encounters with these theologians has been their open-mindedness and willingness to accept the conclusions of modern science. While the interpretation of the scientific account of the world may be contentious, there is considerable consensus on the scientific facts themselves. Basic notions like the big bang theory, the origin of life and consciousness by natural physical processes, and Darwinian evolution seem to cause these theologians little difficulty.

Yet among the general population there is a widespread belief that science and theology are forever at loggerheads, that every scientific discovery pushes God further and further out of the picture. It is clear that many religious people still cling to an image of a God-of-the-gaps, a cosmic magician invoked to explain all those mysteries about nature that currently have the scientists stumped. It is a dangerous position, for as science advances, so the God-of-the-gaps retreats, perhaps to be pushed off the edge of space and time altogether, and into redundancy.

The position I have presented to you today is radically different. It is one that regards the universe, not as the plaything of a capricious Deity, but as a coherent, rational, elegant, and harmonious expression of a deep and purposeful meaning. I believe the time has now come for those theologians who share this vision to join me and my scientific colleagues to take the message to the people. FT

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John Paul II and the Truth about Freedom

Avery Dulles

The rootedness of freedom in the truth has been a constant and central theme in the writings of John Paul II. Already in 1964, as a young bishop at Vatican II, Karol Wojtyla criticized the draft of the declaration on religious freedom because it did not sufficiently emphasize the connection between freedom and truth. "For freedom on the one hand is for the sake of truth and on the other hand it cannot be perfected except by means of truth. Hence the words of our Lord, which speak so clearly to everyone: 'The truth will make you free' (John 8:32). There is no freedom without truth."

Again in his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (1979) John Paul II quoted the words of Christ, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." He added: "These words contain both a fundamental requirement and a warning: the requirement of an honest relationship with regard to truth as a condition for authentic freedom, and the warning to avoid every kind of illusory freedom, every superficial unilateral freedom, every freedom that fails to enter into the whole truth about man and the world."

In his 1993 encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*, the Pope rejects a series of ethical systems that propose novel criteria for the moral evaluation of human action. Despite their variety, he declares, these systems are at one in minimizing or even denying the dependence of freedom upon truth. This dependence, he says, finds its clearest and most authoritative expression in the words of Christ, "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." In *Evangelium Vitae* (1995) the Pope reaffirms the unbreakable link between freedom and truth.

The Pope's philosophy of freedom runs counter to the value-free concept so prevalent in contemporary culture, perhaps especially in the United States. Many people today would say that freedom and truth are wholly separable, since anyone is free to affirm the truth and abide by it, to ignore the truth, or even to deny it and act against it. If freedom were bound by the truth, they ask, how could it be freedom? In the course of his discussion of freedom and law in *Veritatis Splendor*, the Pope proposes his answer to questions such as these.

I

Before undertaking to answer these difficulties, we would do well, I believe, to take a close look at the meaning of the term "freedom," which has different implications at the natural and the personal levels.

At the lower level, that of nature, freedom means the absence of physical constraint. A balloon rises freely when nothing obstructs it; a stone falls freely when nothing impedes it. A dog is free if it is let off the leash so that it can follow its impulses. To be free, in this sense, is to act according to an inner inclination. To be unfree is to have that inclination frustrated.

At the higher level, distinctive to persons, freedom demands, in addition, the absence of psychological compulsion. My freedom as a person is limited to the extent that instinct or passion compels me to act in certain ways, e.g., to flee from danger or flinch with pain.

If my motives could never transcend my individual self-interest or the collective self-interest of my group, I could never be truly free. I could always be manipulated and compelled to act in specific ways by fear of punishment or hope of reward. Just as animals can be drawn by dangling a carrot or banana in front of their noses, so a child can be induced to behave in certain ways by the prospect of gratification or the fear of pain. Unable to escape from the determinism of instinct or appetite, we could be

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forced to act by threats and promises.

One of the benefits of training and discipline is to enhance our zone of inner freedom. By education and exercise we develop the motivation and character that enable us to resist physical and especially psychological pressures. Some learn to go for long periods without sleep, to abstain from food, or to endure intense physical pain without abandoning their resolve. Such persons have greater freedom than others. They have a larger zone of inner self-determination.

In determining my own course of action, I cannot dispense with motives. If choices were completely arbitrary, freedom would be meaningless and in the last analysis impossible. In my free actions I follow what I apprehend as good and worthy of being chosen, but the choice is not forced upon me. I consent to the attraction because my reason approves of it. In acting freely I experience myself as the source of my own activity and as responsible for the results. My actions recoil to some degree on myself, and so make me to be what I am. Thus the freedom to determine one's activity is at the same time self-determination. John Paul II explains this at some length in his major work, *The Acting Person*, and in various philosophical essays written before he became pope.

In *Veritatis Splendor* John Paul II quotes St. Gregory of Nyssa on the royal dignity that pertains to those who have this kind of dominion over themselves. "The soul shows its royal and exalted character . . . in that it is free and self-governed, swayed autonomously by its own will. Of whom else can this be said, save a king?" According to the Pope, freedom does not attain this royal dignity until it rises to the level of making choices that perfect the dynamism of the human spirit toward the divine, following motives that solicit its free adherence. To this effect the Pope quotes from Vatican II:

> God willed to leave them [human beings] "in the hands of their own counsel," so that they would seek their Creator of their own accord and would freely arrive at full and blessed perfection by cleaving to God. (*Gaudium et Spes* 17; *Veritatis Splendor* 38)

As I have said, we possess this freedom only when we go beyond individual and collective selfishness and reach out to that which reason perceives as objectively good and true. Our freedom is not diminished but expanded and fulfilled when we employ it to bring about a true good. This, again, is the teaching of Vatican II:

> Human dignity requires one to act through conscious and free choice, as motivated and prompted personally from within, and not through blind impulse or merely external pressure. People achieve such dignity when they free themselves from all subservience to their feelings, and in a free choice of the good, pursue their own end by effectively and assiduously marshalling the appropriate means. (GS 17; VS 21)

Because the moral law, as known by reason, does not constrain us, it leaves us physically and psychologically free either to obey or to violate it. But if we reject the true good, we inevitably yield to the passions and instincts of our lower nature and thereby undermine our authentic freedom. To act freely against the truth is to erode freedom itself.

Michael Polanyi, the great philosopher of science, speaks in much the same terms as John Paul II. He writes:

> While compulsion by force or by neurotic obsession excludes responsibility, compulsion by universal intent establishes responsibility. . . . *The freedom of the subjective person to do as he pleases is overruled by the freedom of the responsible person to act as he must.*

Lord Acton declared that freedom is "not the power of doing what we like, but the right of being able to do what we ought." As this definition indicates, Acton is concerned not so much with the philosophical as with the political definition of freedom. Those who have a constitutional right to do as they ought are politically free, and if they are not physically or psychologically impeded from following the moral imperative, they are also free in the philosophical sense of the word.

II

In a paper on "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination," John Paul II makes a further inference, based on the relational character of the person. Every person, he maintains, is both a being willed by God for itself and at the same time a being turned toward others. To be isolated from others is a form of self-imprisonment. We become most truly human in the measure in which we go out of ourselves and give ourselves for the sake of others. This "law of the gift," as the Pope calls it, is inscribed deep in the dynamic structure of the person as fashioned in the image of the divine. He confirms this insight by quoting from Vatican II: "The human being, who is the only creature on earth that God willed for itself, cannot attain its full identity except through a disinterested gift of self" (GS 24). The citizen serves the common good out of a free commitment or devotion. Those who love God serve him freely, and if they refuse that service they undermine the freedom that love has given them. Those who obey the commandments out of fear are not fully free, but they fall into even deeper slavery if they disobey God in order to gratify their own impulses. The truly free person is one who does

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what is good out of love for goodness itself.

Thinkers who consider the law of God to be a hindrance to human freedom have been misled into regarding obedience as a form of heteronomy or self-alienation, as though God were a hostile power imposing terms on humanity as a defeated enemy. In fact, God's law proceeds only from benevolence toward creatures whom God loves. The moral law is intended to safeguard human dignity. Human freedom and divine law conspire to the same end.

In this connection John Paul II speaks of "theonomy." Rational knowledge enables us to participate in the light of eternal wisdom, which is expressed in the divine law. In obeying God's law I incline myself before his divine majesty and at the same time follow my deepest vocation as a creature. In the Pope's own words, "Law must therefore be considered an expression of divine wisdom: by submitting to the law, freedom submits to the truth of creation. Consequently one must acknowledge in the freedom of the human person the image and the nearness of God, who is present in all. But one must likewise acknowledge the majesty of the God of the universe and revere the holiness of the law of God, who is infinitely transcendent: *Deus semper maior*" (VS 41).

The supreme exemplars of freedom for John Paul II are the martyrs. They are the heroic persons who are so committed to the known good that they stand up under pressures that would overcome the willpower of most others. Given the choice between denying their principles and losing their lives, they freely lay down their lives and thereby give witness to the truth. Jesus, who freely laid down his life for our sakes, sets the pattern for martyrs.

The martyrs represent an achievement of freedom beyond the capacities of the great majority of men and women. They inspire us by their example to rise above the more limited measure of freedom that we can claim for ourselves. For the theology of freedom it is important to recognize that the freedom with which we are born is frail and limited. John Paul II compares it to a seed that must be cultivated. Some degree of freedom is an essential part of the reflection of God that is constitutive of human nature, but our freedom is incomplete. Wounded as we are by original sin, we often prefer limited and ephemeral goods to those that are pure and abiding. We are even tempted to assert our freedom against our Creator, as though freedom could exist without regard for truth. God's redemptive action in Christ helps to liberate us from this illusion. As Paul writes in Galatians 5:1, "For freedom Christ has set us free" (VS 86). Since Christ himself is the truth (John 14:6), it is also correct to say that the truth sets us free (John 8:32).

III

It is partly in revealing the law that God liberates his people. Already in the Old Testament, God brought the tribes of Israel out of bondage and united them to himself through the Sinai Covenant, which contained the basic precepts of the moral law. That covenant was perfected by the new law of the gospel, which Scripture describes as an interior law "written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts" (2 Corinthians 3:3, quoted in VS 45).

As a new and interior law, the gospel teaches us both by enlightening our minds and by instilling a love and affection for the truth. The divinely given attraction toward the true goal of human existence, which is none other than God himself, does not impede our freedom of choice, since it inclines us toward the very thing that right reason would select. The inner instinct of grace heals our rebellious wills and inclines us to do as God wills. In so doing it removes an obstacle to freedom—our innate tendency to pursue the immediate and apparent good rather than the ultimate and true good. It brings us closer to the final condition of the blessed in heaven, who cannot do other than love God, but who do so freely because they see how lovable God is.

IV

In speaking of the interior law of the gospel imprinted by God on the human heart, I am inevitably raising the question of conscience, which is a subject of considerable confusion in our day. John Paul II remarks that the idea of conscience has been deformed by modern thinkers who have lost the sense of the transcendent and are in some cases atheistic. These thinkers often depict conscience as a supreme and infallible tribunal that dispenses us from considerations of law and truth, putting in their place purely subjective and individualistic criteria such as sincerity, authenticity, and being at peace with oneself (VS 32). In opposition to this trend John Paul II shows in *Veritatis Splendor* that conscience is an act of intelligence that adheres to objective norms. The freedom of conscience is secured by its conformity to truth.

The classical biblical text on conscience, quoted by John Paul II, is Romans 2:14-16: "When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law unto themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them" (cf. VS 57).

The meaning of this dense and complex passage is clarified by a paragraph from Vatican II that John Paul II also quotes:

> In the depths of his own conscience man detects a law which he does not impose on himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always sum-

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> moning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience can when necessary speak to his heart more specifically: "Do this, shun that." For man has in his heart a law written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged (GS 16, quoted in VS 54).

According to these authoritative texts, conscience is not a purely subjective and autonomous principle: it is in no way opposed to the truth of God's law, which is its ground. Its judgments always presuppose the first principle of practical reason, the obligation to do good and avoid evil.

Paul, as we have seen, describes conscience as an unwritten law inscribed by God on the human heart. St. Bonaventure spells out this relationship more explicitly. In a text quoted by John Paul II he writes: "Conscience is like God's herald and messenger; it does not command things on its own authority, but commands them as coming from God's authority, like a herald when he proclaims the edict of a king. This is why conscience has a binding force."

In the history of Catholic theology, John Henry Newman is outstanding for having clarified the relationship between conscience and God. Conscience, he writes in his *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, is the voice of God in the nature and heart of man. In a justly famous paragraph he declares: "Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ, a prophet in its information, a monarch in its peremptoriness, a priest in its blessings and anathemas." In his *Grammar of Assent* Newman speaks of conscience as "our great internal teacher of religion." It "teaches us not only that God is but what He is; it provides for the mind a real image of Him, as a medium of worship." Newman then goes on to explain how it discloses God as lawgiver, judge, and rewarder.

Newman contrasts this true and traditional conception of conscience with what he calls its modern counterfeit. While some philosophers attack the very concept of conscience as a primitive and irrational force, the popular mind, in advocating so-called rights of conscience, really seeks to assert human self-will, without any thought of God at all. Conscience thus becomes "a license to take up any or no religion." For Newman, on the contrary, conscience is a stern monitor and is essentially bound up with the acknowledgment of God. "Conscience has rights because it has duties."

Building on passages such as these, John Paul II is able to show that, far from being a power to make one's decisions autonomously and creatively, conscience binds us to the law of God, to Whom conscience is responsible. He then goes on to remark that conscience is neither adequate nor infallible as a source of moral guidance. Because it attests to a higher intelligence and will to which it is subject, it arouses a concern or anxiety to find out what course of action is here and now required of the individual to do good and avoid evil.

Conscience impels one to seek authoritative direction. Newman eloquently points out the providential role of the Church in supplying this need. In his *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk* he writes:

> All sciences, except the science of Religion, have their certainty in themselves; as far as they are sciences, they consist of necessary conclusions from undeniable premises, or of phenomena manipulated into general truths by an irresistible deduction. But the sense of right and wrong, which is the first element in religion, is so delicate, so fitful, so easily puzzled, obscured, perverted, so subtle in its argumentative methods, so impressible by education, so biased by pride and passion, so unsteady in its flight, that, in the struggle for existence amid the various exercises and triumphs of the human intellect, this sense is at once the highest of all teachers, yet the least luminous; and the Church, the Pope, the Hierarchy are, in the Divine purpose, the supply of an urgent demand.

Conscience, therefore, is in no way opposed to the use of external sources of traditional and revealed wisdom. It seeks help from authority in forming its judgments. Far from being an exception to the general rule that freedom is oriented toward objective truth, the experience of conscientious decision-making confirms the rule that, as the Pope expresses it, the freedom of conscience is never freedom from the truth but always and only freedom in the truth (VS 64).

V

I have tried thus far to establish that freedom is meaningless and self-destructive if it is not used in the service of what is truly good. A freedom that dispenses itself from concern with truth could only be a false and illusory freedom. But it does not follow that the whole course of our life is prescribed in advance by an objective order of truth that excludes any originality and creativity on our part. In most situations we are faced with a choice between several competing goods. Just as I am free to order peas or carrots at dinner, or to wear a plain or striped shirt, so, on a larger scale, I am at liberty to choose any occupation, profession, or walk of life that is honorable in itself and consonant with my abilities and temperament. It would be a mistake to imagine that there would be only one acceptable course of action. Without prescribing everything in advance, God invites us to make creative decisions, in consonance with the moral law.

In this connection one must consider the idea of vocation. God may invite us, without compelling us,

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to do more than duty requires. In his meditation on the call of the rich young man at the beginning of *Veritatis Splendor* John Paul II points out the distinction between obedience to the Commandments, which is required for salvation, and a particular vocation, which may enable an individual to attain more perfect freedom. Many spiritual writers hold that the rich young man, whom Jesus urged to give away his goods to the poor, was not strictly required to perform this generous act. He could presumably have saved his soul by continuing to observe the Commandments, as he had been doing for years. Ordinarily, at least, the vocation to the life of the evangelical counsels does not come as a command but as a gracious invitation. Although we cannot achieve perfect freedom without accepting the highest possibilities opened up to us by God's grace, we are morally free to do all that God does not forbid.

VI

Up to this point I have focused on the freedom of the individual. I should now like to turn to the free society. It is more difficult to see how a society can be directed by truth unless the convictions of many of the members are overridden, in which case the society can hardly be called free. John Paul II, acutely conscious of this problem, offers some important considerations that I shall attempt to summarize.

The free society rests on the supposition that the members are endowed with inalienable rights. If the rights of individuals were conferred by the state or by the society, they could be removed by human power, and the way would be open to tyranny. As the authors of our Declaration of Independence recognized, the Creator Himself has given human beings an inalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, though of course the exercise of these rights has to be regulated with regard to the common good.

Alluding to the biblical and patristic doctrine that human beings are made in the image of God, the Pope contends that the human person, as the visible image of the invisible God, is by nature the subject of rights that no individual, group, class, nation, or state may violate. Where the transcendent source of human dignity is denied, the way lies open for totalitarianism and other forms of despotism, in which naked power takes over, so that the interests of a particular person or group are imposed on the rest of society.

As the Pope goes on to explain (*Centesimus Annus* 46), authentic democracy is possible only on the basis of a rule of law and a correct conception of the human person. "If there is no ultimate truth to guide and direct political activity, then ideas and convictions can easily be manipulated for reasons of power. . . . In a world without truth, freedom loses its foundation and man is exposed to the violence of passion and to manipulation, both open and hidden."

But an objection still arises. People are not free unless they can determine their own form of government and participate in the making of their own laws. Thus it would seem that if they are not at liberty to deny the transcendent truth, they are not really free. On a purely political definition of freedom, we may concede that a people is free to institute slavery or to adopt a totalitarian form of government, but in so doing they damage or destroy their own freedom. An abiding freedom requires a consensus based on transcendent truth. Just as individuals forfeit their own freedom when they try to liberate themselves from moral norms, so the society surrenders its freedom if it fails to respect the personal dignity of its members.

The concept of public consensus is not always rightly understood. According to a widely prevalent view, it is simply a majority opinion, which may be based on fashion or emotion, or an ideology, based on the self-interest of a class. John Courtney Murray, in his masterful work *We Hold These Truths*, explains that according to the classical tradition of political thought, consensus is a very different thing: it is a doctrine or judgment that commands public agreement because of the merits of the arguments in its favor.

Public consensus, according to Murray, transcends sheer experience and expediency; it is basically a moral conception. Those who articulate it are the ones whom Thomas Aquinas called the "wise" (*sapientes*) and whom George Washington called "the wise and honest." The ability to discern what laws and policies best safeguard the dignity and rights of the citizens depends upon a careful inquiry in which intelligence is tutored by experience and reflection and guided by an instinct for the right and the good. The reason of the wise and the good is a responsible reason, concerned with fidelity to moral principle, and matured through familiarity with the complexities of the developing human situation.

The consensus, therefore, must be articulated by those who excel in practical wisdom, but in order to be a real consensus it must also be accepted by the people. At the basis of the American experiment in ordered liberty, Murray explains, there are truths. "We the People" hold these truths and, showing "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind," declare them in public documents. The American consensus consists not only in the general principles expressed in the Declaration of Independence but also in the more specific provisions of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. These provisions likewise embody truths, formulated by the wise and accepted by the people at large.

In the atmosphere of contemporary pluralism, there is a tendency to overlook the inviolable connection between freedom and truth, as though freedom implied a right to construct one's own moral universe

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without accountability to any higher agency. Vaclav Havel speaks in this connection of a deep moral crisis in the post-totalitarian society:

> A person who has been seduced by the consumer value system, whose identity is dissolved in an amalgam of the accoutrements of mass civilization, and who has no roots in the order of being, no sense of responsibility for anything higher than his or her own personal survival, is a *demoralized* person. The system depends on this demoralization, deepens it, is in fact a projection of it into society.

Pope John Paul II, from a similar perspective, speaks of a "crisis of truth" (VS 32). All around us, says the Pope, the saving power of the truth is contested, and freedom alone, uprooted from any objectivity, is left to decide for itself what is good and what is evil (VS 84). As he writes in *Centesimus Annus* (46):

> Nowadays there is a tendency to claim that agnosticism and skeptical relativism are the philosophy and the basic attitude which correspond to democratic forms of political life. Those who are convinced that they know the truth and firmly adhere to it are considered unreliable from a democratic point of view, since they do not accept that truth is determined by the majority or that it is subject to variation according to different political trends.

Democracy, as Murray insisted, is more than a political experiment. It is a spiritual and moral enterprise, depending for its success upon the virtue of the citizens. Political freedom is endangered if the institutions no longer serve the ends of virtue and if the people fail to discipline themselves. The crisis of society, therefore, is simply that of the individual writ large. Just as the freedom of the individual cannot stand without personal adherence to truth, so the free society cannot flourish without a virtuous citizenry, disposed to live out their identity as children of God and as brothers and sisters in a common humanity. The general consensus must be nourished not by disordered passion but by an inner sense of responsibility to a higher law, interpreted by the wise and honest. Because so many of us live according to purely pragmatic standards of pleasure, wealth, and power, we are in danger of losing the moral and spiritual foundations on which our freedom rests.

The contemporary crisis of freedom, therefore, is at root a crisis of truth. Lord Acton perceived this more than a century ago. John Courtney Murray reached similar conclusions on the basis of his study of the American political tradition. In our own day, John Paul II has clearly demonstrated the inseparable connection between freedom and truth. In the course of his long career, he has eloquently and forcefully proclaimed the principles that must underlie every free society, including the American experiment in ordered liberty. ☐

What Ceremony Else?

He said simply they'd always be with us,
Astounding one with such nerve, cold foresight
—All generated in jig-time—no fuss,
He had sized our worlds up, had them down pat,
Left no fly in the ointment to discuss;
Those who'd have given him his coat and hat

—And the high road to Ethiopia,
Nicaragua, any other planet—
Were quite pished on, made easy joke of
At that very fantastical banquet;

Now there are those but remembering the feet,
The unguents, recalling tears, silken hair,
The rub of ceremony—not the meet
And proper handling of an old despair.

T. P. MacGloin

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Murder in the Sudan

Paul H. Liben

In the mid-1980s, it was Ethiopia. Next, it was Bosnia, then Somalia, and later Rwanda. In each case, as war and famine caused thousands of deaths, the media were on or near the scene, demanding immediate action.

Meanwhile, the plight of the Sudan, geographically Africa's largest country, has been largely ignored. A brutal war has driven several million southern Sudanese Christians from their homes and caused the deaths of at least two million more, a calamity that experts say is actually worse than anything the world has seen since Pol Pot's rampages in Cambodia in the 1970s.

The decade-long war is the latest battle in a protracted clash between two cultures in the Sudan—one in the north, the other in the south—the former Arab-dominated and Islamic, the latter African and largely Christian. By the sixth century, having first swept through Egypt and Ethiopia, Christianity advanced along the Nile Valley into what is now the Sudan—giving rise to the fabled Nubian kingdoms. In the centuries that followed, this Christian Nubian civilization laid out beautiful cities, constructed impressive brick monasteries and cathedrals, and long resisted repeated Muslim attempts to conquer it. Islam had reached North Africa by the seventh century and did at last conquer the Nubian kingdoms in the fourteenth century. Resisters were killed or enslaved. The rest accepted Islam or fled south, where for centuries the remnant has held off northern encroachment and its cultural marks of Arabization, Islamization, and slavery.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, the colonizing European nations began a mad scramble to carve up Africa. By the 1870s, Britain had become involved with the Sudan. It was a fateful involvement, one that helped lead to the present conflagration.

From 1874 until 1879, the dominant British figure in the Sudan was General Charles George Gordon, nicknamed "Chinese" for his military exploits in China a decade earlier. A strong if somewhat eccentric evangelical Christian, Gordon was determined to stop northern Arab slave traders from raiding the south and to prepare the region for future economic development that could render slavery obsolete.

In 1881, with Gordon back in Britain, a Sudanese Islamic fundamentalist proclaimed himself the Mahdi ("expected one") and, allied with the slave raiders, threatened the entire Sudan. Reluctantly, British Prime Minister William Gladstone returned Gordon to the Sudan with instructions whose meaning is still far from clear.

Whatever the case with the instructions, three things *were* clear: that Gordon had grown to love the Sudan and its people, including Muslims, and wished to save them from the Mahdists; that he needed reinforcements to do so; and that, once he saved them, he planned to set up a northern government while personally administering the south to protect it from northern imperialism. Arriving in Khartoum in February 1884, Gordon was accorded a hero's welcome by Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Month after month, Gordon held out against the Mahdi, all the while pleading with Britain to send help. At one point, when Gladstone ordered his general home, Gordon refused, replying, "I am in honor bound to the [Sudanese] people."

Gladstone refused to believe that Gordon would actually die for the Sudan, and, trying to force him to return, denied reinforcements. Gordon, entrenched in Khartoum and willing if necessary to die for his cause, refused to leave. By this time, Britain was in an uproar; even Queen Victoria demanded that Gordon be reinforced. The last thing Gladstone wanted was for Gordon to be killed, and Gordon knew it. In this contest of wills, Gladstone finally succumbed. He sent the Royal Army up the Nile, but it was too late. It arrived on Gordon's fifty-second birthday, but by then Khartoum was conquered and Gordon slain.

Horatio Herbert Kitchener was a member of the tardy relief force. Viewing the death scene, he vowed never to rest until he defeated the Mahdists and carried out Gordon's plan to save the Sudan by recognizing and strengthening its two separate cultures. In 1896, his wish was granted. Placed at the head of a British army, he flew up the Nile with ferocious speed and annihilated the fundamentalist armies at Omdurman.

For the next several decades, under Anglo-Egyptian (mostly British) rule, Sudan was administered as Gordon had wanted. Slavery was eliminated, economic development begun, and separate administrations governed the north and south. Proselytism by Christian missionaries in the north was not encouraged, while Arabization and Islamization of the south was effectively halted.

PAUL H. LIBEN *contributed the article "Science Within the Limits of Truth" to the December 1991 issue of* FIRST THINGS.

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Matters remained relatively stable until 1945, when the British electorate threw Winston Churchill out of power. Churchill knew only too well what was at stake in the Sudan; as a young man, he had been part of Kitchener's forces at Omdurman. The ousting of Churchill's Conservatives spelled trouble for Sudan. In 1947, the new British regime betrayed South Sudan, agreeing to an eventually united Sudan in the hands of Khartoum.

Dedicated British civil servants in South Sudan were horrified. One regional governor declared that "the south's future is being . . . decided by the wrong men in the wrong place," by people without any understanding of the south. Strenuous protests notwithstanding, Britain effectively handed the reigns of government over to northern Islamicists in Khartoum in 1956.

The worst fears of Sudan experts in Britain and elsewhere came to pass. Arabization, Islamization, and slavery were revisited on the south, which exploded into a rebellion that did not end until 1972, when Khartoum (unable to conquer the Christian "infidel" in battle) agreed to grant South Sudan a measure of autonomy. By all accounts Khartoum went on to break the essentials of that agreement. In 1983, the regime swung sharply toward Islamic fundamentalism. Local administrators in South Sudan were stripped of what little power they had, and *shari'a*—orthodox Islamic law—was imposed throughout the country, including the Christian south.

William Ochan Ajjugo, then a high school student in Juba, South Sudan's largest city, remembers when *shari'a* was first foisted on his people. "Soon I began seeing the results—people with arms and legs cut off for violating it." In 1984, he helped lead a protest of Christians against *shari'a*. The government arrested him, breaking his fingers before hanging him from the ceiling while beating him. "They tried to get me to renounce my faith, but I refused. Then they suddenly released me." Ajjugo fled the Sudan, eventually arriving in America in 1988.

In 1989, a coup brought an even more radical regime to Sudan—a full-blown, Iranian-style theocracy led by Lt. General Omar Hassan al-Bashir and Sheik Hassan al-Turabi, head of the National Islamic Front (NIF). The regime used the deepening crisis caused by the civil war as the pretext for decreeing martial law.

What has since transpired is the massive proliferation of human rights violations severe even by Sudanese standards. Combining the worldview of medieval Islamic theocracy with the tactics of a modern totalitarian police state, the new government put a stranglehold on the country. Human rights groups have confirmed the existence of "ghost houses" where the regime's perceived enemies are subject to whipping and clubbing, electric shock, partial castration, rape, shackling and suspension by wrists, burning with hot irons, denial of food, water, and sleep, and mock executions. In 1993, government security forces tortured to death retired Brigadier General Camillo Odong N. Loyuk after first chaining his wrists and testicles to the bars of his cell window.

In the new regime, South Sudan faced an enemy more determined than ever to crush through any means its age-old resistance to the march of Islam. Its plight was rendered all the more desperate by a split in 1991 within its fighting force, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). One faction, SPLA Mainstream, favored replacing the Islamic theocracy with a secular democratic government. The other faction, SPLA United, sought to partition Sudan into two separate, independent states, reflecting its distinct Muslim and Christian cultures.

Armed to the hilt by Iran, Iraq, China, and others, Khartoum declared a jihad against the south. The result has been the escalation of one of our century's greatest human tragedies. No southerner, it seems, has been exempt from its horrors. Women have been raped by the tens of thousands, their children torn from their arms and compelled to convert to Islam. Young men have been kidnapped and forced to fight against loved ones. Entire villages and towns have been burned to the ground, their people burned alive or taken into slavery. Jubilee Campaign, a Christian human rights organization, has noted "mounting evidence of the crucifixion of the male populations of entire villages." When the Vatican protested in 1992, Khartoum replied, "The Catholic Church has become the enemy of the Sudanese government. We know how to deal with it." What was meant was apparent. Last summer, according to Vatican Radio, four Catholics were arrested, flogged a hundred times, and then crucified.

Eyewitnesses detail the grisly consequences of Khartoum's strategy of famine, bombings, rape, torture, kidnappings, and slavery. Cabling the State Department, an Ethiopian mission officer reported that "all [south Sudanese] arrivals were naked but for rags around their waists; all had the dull concentration camp stare of the starving. . . . They compared poorly with pictures of Nazi concentration camp victims." Writing to Pope John Paul II, Philip Thon Leek, director of the Friends of African Children Educational Foundation, reported that "over 1.5 million [now almost three million] lives have been lost and at least four million have been internally displaced and over one million are refugees."

Slavery too has reappeared. According to a 1993 State Department report, the "government of Sudan forces routinely steal women and children. Some women and children are kept as wives. Others are shipped north where they perform forced labor or are exported, notably to Libya." In his scathing 1994 report to the UN Commission on Human Rights, special investigator Gaspar Biro confirmed that the

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north is kidnapping women and children and selling or using them as concubines or slaves. Biro also notes that the present regime allows the crucifixion of children as young as seven.

Outside of South Sudan, over a million south Sudanese remain trapped in refugee camps, primarily in neighboring Kenya and Uganda. While family members and friends have lost their lives, these survivors have lost their way of life. Those who once were self-sufficient and productive are now landless, homeless, assetless, and bereft of hope. Last year, William Ajjugo formed an organization called Operation Nehemiah for South Sudan to help reach these refugees. Ajjugo's focus is on economic and spiritual development to help restore conditions necessary for self-sufficiency.

There is little question, however, about the long-term solution for South Sudan, and, indeed, for the entire country. Natural catastrophe is not what is depriving people of their homes, their lands, and their lives. The problem is war, and this particular one is about two cultures that are radically incompatible: fundamentalist Islam and orthodox Christianity. The former is willing to stop at nothing in order to realize its dream of an entire Sudan brought under the hegemony of a literally applied *shari'a*. The latter, meanwhile, proclaims death as preferable to conversion to Islam in any of its forms, which it sees as betrayal of Christ. Indeed, just as the north has in recent years become increasingly fundamentalist in its Islam, so the south has become increasingly fundamentalist in its Christianity. Last year, *Christianity Today* reported that over 75 percent of all south Sudanese consider themselves "born again." Evidence abounds that within all Christian groups, ranging from Catholics and Anglicans to nondenominational movements, genocide has brought not abandonment of faith, but renewal. In South Sudan, Christian martyrdom has as well drawn Christians of all traditions closer together.

The long-term solution to Sudan's troubles is to acknowledge that Sudan is not, nor was it ever, one nation. It was, it is, and it will continue to be two. As William Ajjugo says, "We are already separate culturally and spiritually. Why not politically?" In 1990, the Bush Administration unsuccessfully supported a proposal for a UN referendum regarding the issue of self-rule for South Sudan. Supporters of the referendum proposal hope to convince Congress to push the White House into taking up the issue once again. South Sudan has some friends in Congress, such as Rep. Frank Wolf (R-Va.), but their efforts are limited by lack of grassroots American knowledge, let alone support, of South Sudan. The logical place to garner such support is among American Christians. But as Wolf told syndicated columnist Mary McGrory in 1993, while church people deluged his office regarding politically correct issues concerning Latin America and other arenas, on South Sudan, "I hear silence."

It is time to break that silence. FT

The Locker and the Mill

Christ's body:
Earth's first fruit.
Crushed grape, locked;
Winnowed wheat, ground.

Dark, damp cellar
Hot, dry oven
Perfect perfect fare.

Edward L. DeRosa

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Books In Review

America's Communal Origins

THE MYTH OF AMERICAN INDIVIDUALISM: THE PROTESTANT ORIGINS OF AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT. By BARRY ALAN SHAIN. *Princeton University Press. 394 pp. $39.50.*

Reviewed by **Eugene D. Genovese**

THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC, Barry Alan Shain argues, arose on Christian and communitarian, not secular and radical-individualist, foundations. With solid scholarship enhanced by good sense, he combats the prevalent tendency to read the eighteenth-century texts through twentieth-century eyes. Most Americans, he writes, "had little patience with those who might claim that the rights of individuals (except religious conscience) were inviolable and capable of trumping public needs." Throughout this well-documented book, he makes out a powerful case, drawing skillfully upon the findings of social historians to buttress his account of the intellectual history.

"America's Protestant, democratic, and communal localism," Shain writes, "is its most enduring political tradition." But he forcefully distinguishes this communal localism from the totalitarianism of our own century, crediting Christian doctrine with keeping the one from sliding into the other. In a particularly strong contribution, he demonstrates that Christian assumptions proved strong enough to limit drastically the extent to which even anti-Christian rationalists could advance individualistic doctrines. But here he underestimates the extent to which rationalists like Price and Jefferson opened the way to the very radical individualism they claimed to be rejecting.

Glancing into the nineteenth century, Shain notes that the great Joseph Story, in explicating the First Amendment clause on religion in his *Commentaries on the Constitution*, "reminded his readers of the intimate relationship that America had traditionally maintained between church and state." Shain might well have added that Story elsewhere destroyed Jefferson's preposterous attempt to deny that Christianity had shaped the development of the common law from the beginning. Story's great reply to Jefferson deserves the widest circulation today, for it demonstrates, as little else does, the centrality of Christian doctrine to Anglo-American freedoms.

SHAIN CANNOT be contradicted for asserting that "Christian" in the Revolutionary era meant primarily "Reformed Protestant," but he slips into some questionable generalizations. He does not offer his own understanding of Reformed Protestantism until page 124, and then he passes over it so lightly as to be less than helpful to readers who might need some guidance. And he attributes to Reformed theology some core Christian beliefs that were shared by Methodists and Roman Catholics, among others. When, for example, he quotes Samuel Davies on "God's first transforming the heart of a sinner," he might have been quoting John Wesley or the Pope, notwithstanding the important differences in explication.

Shain shows that the doctrines of original sin and human depravity grounded much of the political theory and practice of the day. But again, he treats the doctrines as Calvinist or Reformed, although his evidence shows that, within the limits here applicable, the Reformed theologians shared this ground with other Christians. Since he is right to stress the dominance of the Reformed churches, the criticism

EUGENE D. GENOVESE *is author of* The Southern Tradition: The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism *(1994) and* The Southern Front: History and Politics in the Cultural War *(1995).*

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might seem a pedantic quibble. But what Shain misses is the extent to which the Reformed theologians were already beginning the retreat that steadily gained momentum during the nineteenth century, with the triumph of the Unitarians in Boston and at Harvard and the rise of the New Divinity and New Haven theologies, to say nothing of more overtly liberal theologies.

It is true that those in retreat from the doctrines of original sin and human depravity tried to hold fast to the communal vision, but it is no less true that their step-by-step retreat from Christian orthodoxy, whether bold or shamefaced, opened the floodgates to the radical individualism they meant to rein in by compromises that were too smart by half.

And here the slavery question bedevils Shain, whose self-restriction to the Revolutionary era permits him to treat slavery largely as an abstraction. Without falling prey to the whiggish tendency to read the end into the beginning, we ought to notice how the struggle between the communitarian and radical-individualistic visions developed historically. Increasingly, the slave-holding South stood for the former, and the free labor North for the latter. As Shain admits, Lincoln, not Madison, "would lead an army of millions and be the first to prevail against American local communalism."

IN GENERAL, the South held fast to religious orthodoxy, especially on the doctrines of original sin and human depravity, while the North slid toward theological liberalism. During the nineteenth century the proslavery divines celebrated the superiority of their social system as one that, being based on organic social relations, rejected the siren calls of marketplace ideology, whether in religion or in social and political theory. They cried out that the advance of bourgeois social relations in the North was promoting the radical individualism that northern conservatives were lamenting—that Christian values could not be sustained without organic social relations. Their solution—slavery in principle, not merely racial slavery—went down hard even among the most conservative northern Christians and properly goes down even harder today. But their critique of the marketplace and its values retains its force.

At that, Shain carries a good thing too far in his emphasis on the communalism of the Christian tradition. At his best, he strikes a proper balance, but too often he slides into one-sidedness. The doctrine of original sin would, after all, be incomprehensible without the doctrine of the immortality of the individual soul and, with it, the new sense of personal freedom and responsibility attendant upon the "good news" of Jesus.

Shain does not intend to promote the "atavistic, two-hundred-year-old, communal political practices and attitudes appropriate for a preindustrial, slave-tolerant society," but he does insist that "for Rev-

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olutionary-era Americans, the common or public good enjoyed preeminence over the immediate interests of individuals." Thus, eighteenth-century Americans "cannot be accurately characterized as predominantly individualistic, or, for that matter, classically republican." Rather, they lived in "morally demanding agricultural communities shaped by reformed-Protestant social and moral norms."

Shain seeks to distance himself from those who interpret the primacy of community and the public good as an attachment to localism per se. Sensibly, he regards as "unclear" the extent to which early communalism can be adapted to our times, and he unsparingly criticizes its dark and bigoted side. He properly notes that in certain instances, most notably the struggles against slavery and racial segregation, federal power proved necessary to eradicate the great social evils attendant upon the enforcement of local rights. But he is vague about the extent to which federal power and the consequent destruction of community autonomy ought to be supported.

If I am reading his subtext correctly, Shain has a political agenda, and a good one. Having come from the New Left and moved to discernibly more conservative ground, he, in effect, recalls the left to its original communitarian and anti-individualist principles, thereby suggesting the possibilities for new political and ideological alliances.

The strategy and scholarly performance are generally admirable, but he is sometimes a bit too clever in his effort to assimilate left-wing and right-wing criticism of the radical-individualist interpretation of early American history. The argument for the communal, or corporate, foundation of the American political tradition will be familiar to those who have read Willmoore Kendall, among others, and the emphasis on religious foundations recalls the excellent work of M. E. Bradford and Ellis Sandoz. Yet these conservatives get short shrift in comparison to the attention paid to the social-democratic Joyce Appleby, the value of whose work he grossly inflates. He praises her for originality and virtues others may not find in her books, and then he proceeds to expose, albeit courteously and graciously, the superficiality of her understanding of the Christian tradition. Still, Shain does score a political coup in gathering book-jacket blurbs from Appleby, Rogers M. Smith, Edward Countryman, and Forrest McDonald in what surely deserves to rank as a triumph of political ecumenism.

Notwithstanding my carping, Shain has written an impressive, well-argued, deeply researched book that enriches our understanding of early American history and arms us for current political struggles against the twin tendencies to cultural nihilism and political centralization. Shain writes that eighteenth-century Americans considered human reason a part of the reason of a God-ordered universe: "To violate this principle in man is to transgress the universal law. One should believe in a morally ordered universe to be convinced by such appeals to inalienable rights. Skeptics, doubters, atheists, and postmodernists need not apply." Indeed.

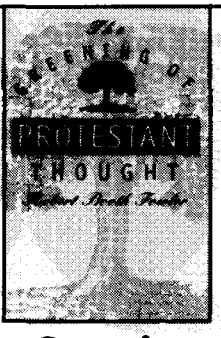
Keeping the Conversation Going

One By One From the Inside Out. By Glenn C. Loury. *Free Press. 332 pp. $25.*

***Reviewed by* Janet Marsden**

Subtitled "Essays and Reviews on Race and Responsibility in America," this is one of the most refreshingly, albeit painfully, candid books on race to have appeared in many a year. (Two of the major essays appeared first in the pages of First Things.) Perhaps a book such as this could not have been written before now, before a critical mass of articulate black thinkers began to express their spirited dissent from the racial orthodoxies of the last thirty years. Not that Loury, a professor of economics at Boston University, can be easily subsumed into the category of "conservative black thinkers." He is not conservative in the vein of, for instance, Thomas Sowell or Walter Williams. Nor is he a liberal pegged

Janet Marsden *is a writer living in New York City.*



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as a conservative because he dares dissent from political correctness in the manner of Shelby Steele or Stephen Carter. Glenn Loury is very much one of a kind.

About the time this book appeared, the *New Yorker* ran a long profile on Loury, asking whether he is the appropriate messenger of the gospel of self-help to black America. The question of Loury's appropriateness, in the mind of the *New Yorker*, is at least twofold. First, he has for a number of years been known to be giving aid and comfort to that energetic band of intellectual entrepreneurs called neoconservatives. Second, there is the matter of his sordid personal history and, again in the mind of the *New Yorker*, his even more offputting convictions as a born-again Christian. This Loury person is not easy to peg.

Mickey Kaus of the *New Republic* has appreciatively reviewed the book while complaining that Loury seems caught in some of his own contradictions. For instance, says Kaus, Loury wants blacks to accept responsibility for their lives as individuals and not as members of a racial tribe, while he at the same time calls on middle-class blacks to act as though they are responsible for the tribe, especially those members of the tribe who are in the urban underclass. For another instance, says Kaus, Loury criticizes neoconservatives for not being committed to government programs aimed at helping those in poverty, while at the same time he brilliantly analyzes the futility and even iatrogenic harm of such programs. There is an element of justice in the points raised by Kaus and others.

TO READ CAREFULLY *One By One*, however, is to learn that such criticisms fail to get to the heart of who Loury is and what he is attempting to do. In some ways, Loury has recapitulated in his own life the ordeal of black-white tensions in our society. A bright kid with robust appetites, he found himself at an early age with a full professorship at Harvard, without even having published a book. Affirmative action? Of course, and Loury knows it, and knows that in the view of many it does not jibe with his stringent attacks on affirmative action as an utterly wrongheaded effort to achieve a discrimination-free society by practicing racial discrimination. Without wading too deep into psychological analysis (although Loury gives permission to do so), these inner conflicts had everything to do with a Harvard professor who, feeling simultaneously condescended to and omnipotent, was doing drugs, was keeping a mistress whom he violently abused, and was generally living outside the rules binding upon ordinary mortals. After the great and (in retrospect) inevitable crash, he was lifted up from the bottom by amazing grace. Far from this discrediting him as a messenger, Glenn Loury can speak to blacks in trouble with the credibility of one who has been

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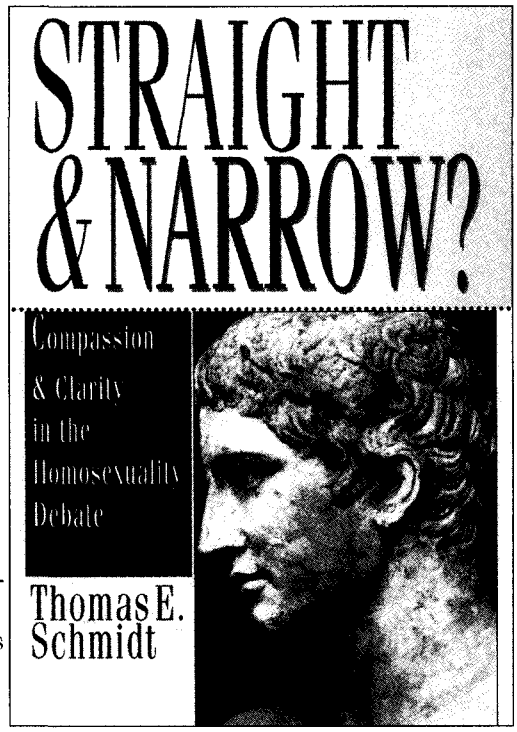
there. Or at least he speaks to some blacks in trouble.

To black academics, for example, and those who still go by the antiquated job category of "civil rights leader" Loury's passionate concern is for the young men and women caught in the underclass, and his passionate anger is directed at putative leaders who refuse to acknowledge the trap, and thus strengthen its grip. He writes:

> Since the late 1960s black American intellectuals and politicians have fallen prey to what amounts to a conspiracy of silence about the social and moral condition of the black lower classes. We have tolerated incompetence in the social and political institutions serving this population, because its source has been black. We have made excuses for and sometimes even glorified the supposedly rebellious actions of thugs, although those thugs have made poor black people their victims. We have strained our imaginations, and our fellow citizens' credulity, to find apologies for the able-bodied, healthy, and intelligent young men who father children and then walk away from the responsibility to support them. We have listened in silence, or sometimes with enthusiastic encouragement, to middle-class young black men and women, at the best colleges and universities explain . . . their failure to make full use of the opportunities presented to them. In the name of racial loyalty, and in an effort to keep alive the sense of oppression that fueled the revolts of our youth, we have engaged in an almost criminal abdication of responsibility.

That is not the kind of talk likely to win an award from the NAACP. It is likely to earn, and indeed it has earned, Loury a reputation as an Uncle Tom in some circles—but people in those circles are increas-



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Until recently, few Christians had problems with the proposition that human sexuality is not an appetite to be satisfied or a need to be met but a gift to be rightly ordered according to God's will. The sexual convulsions of recent decades, especially the advocacy of gay and lesbian rights, have dramatically shaken the confidence of many Christians in what they thought to be a biblical sexual ethic. Those Christians are among the many readers who will benefit greatly from the thoughtful argument offered by Thomas Schmidt." **Richard John Neuhaus, editor in chief of *First Things: A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life***

"Thomas Schmidt has written a careful, searching and thorough book on a difficult and controverted subject. Both those interested in the meaning of disputed biblical texts and those concerned about broader moral questions can profit—as I have—from his work." **Gilbert Meilaender, Department of Religion, Oberlin College**

"I welcome Tom Schmidt's *Straight & Narrow?* with enormous gratitude and the deepest appreciation. It is remarkably informative on medical and behavioral questions, as well as expertly incisive on the biblical evidence. It shirks no issue and evades no counterarguments. The author goes to extreme pains to be fair to revisionist viewpoints, and the whole is set in a person-focused pastoral frame. It is in my judgment without equal as an indictment—as devastating as it is calmly and lucidly argued—of the pro-gay case as not only unbiblical and unreasonable but also socially and medically highly irresponsible. A book that deploys accessible scholarship with prophetic power." **David F. Wright, University of Edinburgh**

Thomas E. Schmidt teaches New Testament and Greek at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California.

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ingly on the defensive today. Loury knows it, and slowly but surely they are coming to know it. They have gone beyond straining the credulity of their fellow citizens. Their habit of attributing every black failure to white racism has made them appear both mendacious and unimaginative. Movies glorifying the Panthers and other assorted thugs still have a constituency, but it is small and growing smaller. White liberal guilt is a cultivated taste, and fewer people are making the effort. The black radical shuffle no longer intimidates, or at least it does not intimidate enough people to make it politically effective.

Yet weaving in and out of *One By One* is the author's palpable anxiety that he not be misunderstood. There are racists out there, and he is determined not to give them aid and comfort. He does not want to be associated with conservatives (neo- or otherwise) who have, in his view, simply given up on black America, or at least on the bottom third of black America. It is an awful tangle in which he finds himself, but he must say what he must say:

> Blacks have something to prove both to themselves and to white onlookers, many of whom may appear not to be particularly sympathetic. This is not fair; it is not right; but it is the way things are. Some conservatives are not above signaling, in more or less overt ways, their belief that blacks can never pass [the test of achievement by merit], and that there is little point in the rest of society bearing guilt for blacks' failures. Some radical black nationalists are not above saying, increasingly more openly now, that blacks can never make it in "white America"—and so we should stop trying, go our own way, and maybe burn a few things down in the process. At bottom these two parties agree that the magnitude of the challenge facing blacks in this post-civil rights environment is beyond our capacities. What Shelby Steele and others (myself included) have been saying is that blacks can and must meet this challenge. In proving our capacity to do so we deserve the support of our fellow citizens, but petitioning for it cannot be the highest order of business for us when we are confronted by the more urgent task of developing ourselves, our families, and our communities in this new era of opportunity. It is for saying this that the barons of righteous social thought on racial matters, black and white, have condemned writers such as Steele [and, of course, Glenn Loury].

In *One By One* and his other writing, Loury is petitioning the rest of us for support. Almost certainly, more whites than blacks will read this book. But what precisely are we to support? That is the question of the above-mentioned Mickey Kaus. There is a better answer to it than Kaus suggests. Certainly Loury does not want us to support more of the same, or even the same, in terms of government interventions. But, if I read him rightly, Loury wants us to support his efforts and those of others who are speaking truth to the still dominant powers among black intellectuals and politicians. Such efforts give the lie to what is accurately described as the racist slander that black Americans are incorrigibly incapable of facing the truth about their situation, are perpetually parasitic on the larger society, and have no other strategy than to exploit white guilt in order to continue the free ride that blacks are getting on the wagon that others pull (to use Senator Phil Gramm's ugly image). In short, Glenn Loury is saying that there has to be a better way and, even though he is short on details, the

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sheer saying of that is of inestimable importance for blacks and whites who know that we must live together and, please God, can maybe flourish together in one American society.

One By One is, then, a frankly moral argument. Yes, there are analyses and proposals, always framed in language that is elegant even when angry, but finally Loury's is a convincing argument that our present circumstance is morally intolerable. Both whites and blacks should find it intolerable. That finding is a beginning of no little importance. Whether out of guilt or ignorance or simply because they do not want to hurt the feelings of blacks, whites are notoriously inept when it comes to talking with blacks about blacks. Whether in movies, college classrooms, rap music, or books, most blacks assume and most whites assume that blacks talk and whites listen.

Glenn Loury does not assume that. He is liberal, in the old-fashioned sense of that word, in insisting upon a conversation. Even if he does not know what, if anything, the conversation will produce, conversation is an inherent good and essential to our being human together. Although he does not use the term, Loury's argument is driven by what might be described as a Christian humanism. After all is said and done, after all the old racial ploys and tactics are exhausted, we share a common *humanum* created in the image of God. Those who are ready to join the conversation made imperative by that fact would do well to prepare themselves by a thoughtful reading of *One By One From the Inside Out.*

Eros and Rage

THE THERAPY OF DESIRE: THEORY AND PRACTICE IN HELLENISTIC ETHICS. By MARTHA NUSSBAUM. *Princeton University Press. 558 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by **Edward T. Oakes**

IN 1986 Martha Nussbaum published *The Fragility of Goodness,* a study of the ethics of Plato, Aristotle, and the Greek tragedians that won immediate acclaim, not only from philosophers but from the general public as well.

The book's merits were considerable. Arguing roughly against the Iris Murdoch school of contemporary platonism, Nussbaum insisted on the superiority of Aristotle's ethics, leveling the charge against Plato's ethics generally that Aristotle raised against his politics specifically: that it was too idealistic and too divorced from the constraints of everyday affairs to be of use to real statesmen of real cities. Aristotle's rootedness in common sense, on the contrary, made for both a politics and an ethic that could genuinely guide people in their everyday dilemmas.

But besides arguing this main point, the book went on to establish its thesis by adducing the example of the Greek tragedians, even claiming that Plato had personally been so unnerved by his encounter with Greek tragedy that he was well-nigh forced to ban tragedy and poetry from his ideal republic, whereas one would expect the author of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to have written the first, and still the most influential, work on tragedy, the *Poetics.*

Yet, ironically enough, Nussbaum's treatment of the tragedians, particularly of Euripides' *Hecuba,* seemed to undermine Aristotle's ethics as much as Plato's. Aristotle is nothing if not optimistic about human nature and its potential for happiness in the empirical world, but Nussbaum's portrait of that same world through the eyes of Euripides produced a much grimmer picture than that depicted in Aristotle's works. It is as if the *Poetics* was his way of domesticating the same terror that induced Plato to ban plays and poetry altogether.

This now seems to be the view of the author herself toward her earlier work, for in her penultimate chapter on Seneca's *Medea* she avers that "the real danger posed by literature to philosophy is perhaps nowhere more evident than here." At the heart of Nussbaum's new position is her realization that "Aristotle has let the emotions into the good life without understanding how they operate." His optimism is really a weaker form of the same wishful thinking that made Plato so anxious when confronted with the vision of the tragedians: "The message to the Aristotelian is, then, that there is no

EDWARD T. OAKES, S.J., *is author of* Pattern of Redemption: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar *(Continuum).*

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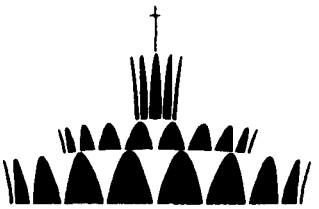

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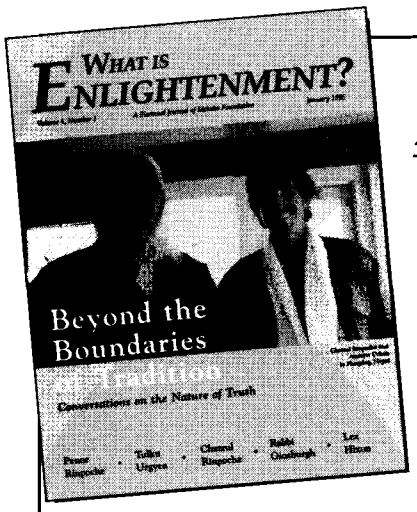
safe way of combining deep personal love with spotless moral purity. If you are determined to be a person who cherishes all the virtues . . . you had better omit erotic love."

But Nussbaum does not abandon Aristotle because she realizes the dichotomy between virtue and erotic love and thus abandons virtue in favor of eros. Quite the contrary, she admits into her own vision the full force of the Stoics' and Epicureans' critique of eros, which maintains that "there is no erotic passion that reliably stops short of its own excess." Epicurus—belying his own reputation among nonexperts as the first of the pleasure-seeking "Epicureans"—is particularly severe on the illusions of erotic love. Not only does Eros "pollute sexual relationships with quasi-religious illusions that prevent us from acknowledging one another as human beings," it also is the reason there is an "adversarial relationship between sexual indulgence and the orderly conduct of the rest of life."

In fact Epicurus is the first philosopher in the West to draw a distinction in the spectrum of human appetites that establishes the natural foundation for a possible life of healthy celibacy: he distinguishes among purely empty desires with no inherent basis in the human organism (such as the desire for wealth or fame), natural necessary desires (such as for food and shelter), and natural non-necessary desires (such as for sex) that are grounded in the human organism but are nonetheless dispensable. The latter can, as Nussbaum says, "be neglected without jeopardizing our happy undisturbed condition."

IN SOME WAYS, the Stoics, especially Lucretius, are even more critical of the lures of eros. Lucretius has always been a popular philosopher among atheists because of his atomic materialism, but Nussbaum cannot help noting how many of his devoted commentators maintain a discreet silence when it comes to his critique of erotic love—while others even accuse him of insanity or being an embittered old man. But as she wryly notes, love nowadays "has the status of a secular religion, and people often prove far more willing to give up god or gods than to stop making gods of one another." This tart insight then gives the author the perspective to offer what I believe is a wholly convincing feminist interpretation of Lucretius, showing that the unhappiness of so many marriages comes from a lack of reciprocity and mutual recognition that has its roots in the over-idealization of the erotic other ("Does a goddess have needs?" she asks).

And Seneca is, if anything, even more withering than Lucretius in his critique of the ideal of sexual happiness. Not only does Seneca condemn all erotic passion toward one's spouse, he also insisted, well before Augustine, that married people should have intercourse for reproduction only. But really he goes much further than Augustine would ever presume to venture, for Seneca insists that we can never safely guarantee that love will not give birth to murder. For it is love itself that provides rage with its most exquisite fuel—by exalting the loved one into a god or goddess. Medea, then, stands for all of us who seek religious refuge from the world by a flight into an idealized, eroticized other. According to Nussbaum, Seneca's play claims that "none of us, if we love, can stop ourselves from the wish to kill." Her analysis, I should note, is not remotely similar to those glib accusations one hears today that all erotic relationships, especially between men and women inside marriage, are inherently violent and exploitative. Actually, and ironically enough, it rather approaches the ancient Christian suspicion of the erotic appetite, with which Hellenistic ethics has so much in common—not surprisingly, considering the heavy borrowing from Stoic and Epicurean ethics by



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the Church Fathers. This is especially noticeable in Epicurus' recommended cure for love. "By a passion for true philosophy," he says, "every disturbance and burdensome desire is undone." In other words, as so many ancient Christian writers knew, especially Augustine and the Areopagite, one sort of eros drives out the other.

NUSSBAUM'S analysis is particularly acute on anger. She avers that it was the issue of anger that first prompted her to write a second volume on Hellenistic ethics, hoping that the recommendations of the ancients for its extirpation would prove relevant today (hence her title). Her book does not conclude on a very hopeful note in that regard, partly because she still wants, after all is said and done, to cling to the wisdom of Aristotle despite the education she has given "Nikidion" (the fictional student who visits the various schools to learn from them and who must at times disguise herself, Yentl-like, as a male to gain admission—above all, in Aristotle's lyceum).

Despite her intense immersion in post-Aristotelian thought, "Nikidion" (and obviously through her, the author) still fells drawn to the Stagirite and to his opinion on the legitimacy of anger: "For those who do not get angry at the people at whom they should get angry seem dense, without perception or pain. And a person who is not angry will not defend himself; but to allow oneself and one's loved ones to be trampled underfoot and to overlook it is slavish." Yet as Medea herself says in Seneca's play. "Anger puts love to flight. . . . How difficult it is to turn the soul from its anger when once it is aroused." This ambiguity is aptly depicted in the figure of the Furies, who are described by Seneca as legitimate avengers while simultaneously foul and hideous. "They bring their serpents," says Nussbaum, "to the soul of the one who, with whatever justice, invokes them."

Moreover, her pessimism also comes from realizing, as Aristotle never seemed to, that it is love itself that fuels the anger. He did once observe that the slights of those we love seem more cutting, and so we get angry at loved ones more than at strangers. But he never seemed to have reached the crucial insight of Seneca or Euripides that fury comes from love itself. As Nussbaum concludes rather grimly, "Now we know the deepest reason why the Aristotelian cannot say, 'I shall have love in my life, but I shall get rid of murderous rage.' It is because it is love itself that rages and does murder."

THIS INSIGHT allows the spectator both to identify with and pity Medea while fully realizing the evil she has conjured forth: Seneca "shows that a betrayal that comes from the outside, through no fault of the woman's own, can still produce evil in the woman's soul." In a passage of unsparing descriptive honesty, Nussbaum shows how Medea's rage leads her to murder not only the children gathered about her hem but also the unborn child in her womb:

> Enraged by the knowledge that he has been in her, that he might even now be in her, maddened by the thought of a piece of him, of their love, lodged in her own body, feeding on it, she retaliates with the wish for a murderous vaginal penetration, one that will pierce where he pierced, cancel his penetration with one controlled and managed by her alone: one that, ridding her body of love's tumorlike growth, will restore her to the health of self-sufficiency. "My kingdom has come back," she exults. "My stolen virginity has come back."

A page later Nussbaum will insist that "no person who loves can safely guarantee that she, or he, will stop short of this story." In fact the author explicitly applies the lessons of this story, and the lessons of Stoic morality generally, to the storms of contemporary "gender relations" in a way that might make many of her readers very uncomfortable indeed:

> The idea that there is a morally appropriate way of leaving one's family and children strikes the Stoic as quite self-serving. These things are bad. And the conflict of values that gives rise to the bad actions involved in divorce would not have arisen at all had the person not valued eros. So all this talk of unavoidable necessity, so frequently heard at these times, is so much self-serving

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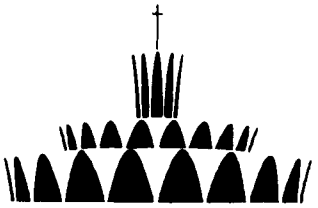

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cant. There are well-known and efficacious ways of changing one's disposition toward eros, of forming a truly rational marriage. If a person doesn't take them up, he is surely responsible for whatever wrongs ensue. As Phaedra says in Seneca's version of her story, "It is mind, not chance, that produces infidelity."

It is of course not the office of a reviewer to hope for a book different from the one intended by the author, but it should be noted in passing that Nussbaum's book, brilliant and eloquent though it is, hews strictly to the division of labor now prevalent when academics research the mind of the ancient world: philosophers and classicists treat pagan texts only, while patrologists pretty much stick to the literature of the ancient Church. One cannot fault the author for her selection of texts in a book already quite long (even with her deliberate neglect of the Cynics, perhaps the most noticeable omission in the book). But the parallels with ancient Christian morality that she adduces are quite striking, so that the reader will gain a more stereoscopic view of how the world of Hellenistic antiquity approached these issues by reading Nussbaum's book in conjunction with Peter Brown's recent study *The Body and Society*. For one of the most arresting results of her powerful book is to realize how much Christian and pagan authors spoke with one voice in matters of natural ethics.

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FROM TEXT TO CONTEXT: THE TURN TO HISTORY IN MODERN JUDAISM. By ISMAR SCHORSCH. *University Press of New England. 403 pp. $39.95.*

Reviewed by **Jacob Neusner**

IN THIS COLLECTION of twenty-one free-standing essays, Ismar Schorsch, Chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and a principal voice of Conservative Judaism, treats topics connected with the advent of historical study as a medium of Judaic theological discourse, or, in his language, "historical consciousness in Modern Ju-

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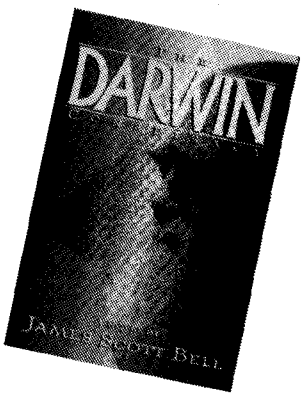

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daism." He credits the main figures, Leopold Zunz and Heinrich Graetz, with creating "a historical consciousness that could serve as a base for a voluntaristic and secular Jewish community." Reform and what we now know as Conservative Judaism founded their theological systems on the primacy of historical data.

> The emergence of historical consciousness in modern Judaism . . . comprises a fundamental change in mentality and epitomizes the dialectic process of Westernization that transformed medieval Ashkenazic Judaism. . . . Historical thinking facilitated the urgent and agonizing effort to rethink the nature of Judaism. It quickly became the primary vehicle for translating the ideas, institutions, and values of an ancient oriental religion into equivalent or related Western categories.

That Schorsch recognizes the fundamentally theological character of the enterprise emerges in his description, as first-rate apologetics, of historical study:

> The heady recovery of the Jewish past filled Jews with pride and self-confidence. Their growing appreciation for the pathos of Jewish history, for the power of Jewish values and ideas, and for the persistence of the Jewish people countered the blandishments of assimilation. To unfurl the antiquity of Judaism created new grounds for a sense of sacred obligation.

These represent theological, not academic and historical, judgments. We stand at the end of the period of historicism in the theology of Judaism, marked by the loss of self-confidence once enjoyed by the conceptions set forth by the theologian-historians of reformist Judaisms—Reform, Conservative, and Modern Orthodoxy alike. For the same ideas that Schorsch argues provided an apologetics for being Jewish (for the secular Jews) or for acknowledging a "sacred obligation" imposed by history (for the religious one, the Judaists) no longer serve. Those ideas have lost plausibility for those Jews, and there are many, who through marriage or sheer inactivity opt out of that organized community—secular, eleemosynary, and voluntaristic—that in America stands for all but segregationist Orthodox Judaism. Schorsch tells the story of the beginnings of what in our own day comes to an end.

He adduces ample testimony to that fact when he presents as "evidence for the formative role of Jewish history in the shaping of the multiple identities of modern Jews" such data as "the role of the Maccabees, Masada, and archaeology in Israeli culture, or the grip of the Holocaust on the contemporary American Jewish scene." The same argument would point to the celebration of the Torah in synagogue worship as an act of historical consciousness of Sinai, or of the celebration of the Lord's Supper as an act of mere mimesis. But for the Israelis the mythopoeic power of Masada derives not from the study of history but the utilization of history for political myth, and the Holocaust forms a principal component for secular Jewish ideology for quite other than narrowly academic, historical considerations. In both cases the past serves because it contributes events ripped out of context, not because the past imposes a philosophy of history, a proportionate and cogent statement of beginnings, middles, and endings that could validate the claim that historicism has triumphed. Past events serve theological or ideological purposes without necessarily attesting to the presence of historical consciousness at all.

WHILE STRESSING what was novel, Schorsch goes still further when he alleges that "historical consciousness was always the substratum of Jewish identity." This defines the theme of the twenty-one essays collected in the book: historical scholarship and the scholars that produced it. Such an allegation, vital to the book as a whole, would have surprised the sages of Judaism from the formative age to the nineteenth century (and the vast majority of Jewish sages in the world today), who speak not of "Judaism" but of "the Torah," and for whom "the Torah" stands in judgment upon history. That is because the Torah—a.k.a., "Judaism"—speaks out of eternity into time. To its statements, historical

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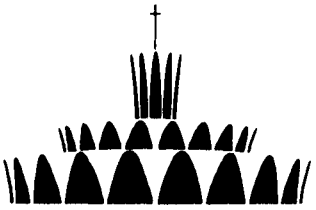

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facts prove monumentally irrelevant, and historians' allegations as to what "really" happened or did not happen—and that is what Schorsch celebrates as historicism—have no consequences whatsoever for the Torah.

The issue concerns the place of historical fact in the formulation of theological truth. Many of the scholars cited by Schorsch take for granted that "Judaism" is a "historical religion" and rests on an interpretation of historical fact. Their position takes shape in their reading of Scripture. Specifically, the Hebrew Scriptures of ancient Israel, all modern scholarship concurs, set forth Israel's life as history, with a beginning, middle, and end; a purpose and a coherence; a teleological system. All accounts agree that Scriptures distinguished past from present, present from future, and composed a sustained narrative, made up of one-time, irreversible events. All maintain that, in Scripture's historical portrait, Israel's present condition appealed for explanation to Israel's past, perceived as a coherent sequence of weighty events, each unique, all formed into a great chain of meaning. But that historicist reading violates the position of the Torah, oral and written, which at no point submits questions of theological truth to the judgment of historical fact. "Judaism" may be "a historical religion," but for those who live life within the Torah, the world is framed by other-than-historical boundaries.

SCHORSCH'S ESSAYS amply demonstrate that the idea of history, with its rigid distinction between past and present and its careful sifting of connections from the one to the other, came quite late onto the scene of intellectual life—specifically at the beginning of Reform Judaism, born in the midst of the historical-romantic age of the early nineteenth century. Yet both Judaism and Christianity for most of their histories have read the Hebrew Scriptures in an other-than-historical framework. They found in Scripture's word paradigms of an enduring present, by which all things must take their measure; they possessed no conception whatsoever of the pastness of the past. For Judaism's sages of blessed memory, as for the saints and sages of Christianity, the past took place in the acutely present tense of today, but the present found its locus in the presence of the ages as well. And that is something historical thinking cannot abide. Not only so, but it contradicts the most fundamental pattern of explanation that we ordinarily take for granted in contemporary cultural life. For two hundred years historicism has governed.

In fact, historicism forms a barrier between us and the understanding of time that defined the Judaic and the Christian encounter with God through the Scriptures of ancient Israel. The givenness of the barrier between time now and time then yields for us banalities about anachronism, on the one side, and imposes upon us the requirement of mediating between historical fact and religious truth, on the other. Receiving those Scriptures and systematically reviewing them, the Judaism of the "dual Torah"—that is, the Written Law embodied in the Pentateuch plus the Oral Law, eventually canonized in the Talmud—recast this corpus of historical thinking, substituting paradigm or pattern for narrative sequence, by redefining the received notion of time altogether. That transformation of ancient Israel's Scripture from history to paradigm defines the conception of history of Rabbinic Judaism—calling into question the notion that that Judaism possessed a conception of history at all.

IN THE JUDAISM set forth by principal documents that record the oral part of the dual Torah, particularly those that reached closure from ca. 200 to ca. 600 C.E., both documents of law such as the Mishnah and Tosefta, and documents of Scriptural exegesis—such as Sifre to Deuteronomy, Genesis Rabbah, Leviticus Rabbah, and Song of Songs Rabbah—concepts of history, coming to expression in the categories of time and change, along with distinctions between past, present, and future utterly give way to a conception of recording and explaining the social order different from that of history. It is one that sets aside time and change in favor of enduring paradigms recapitulated in age succeeding age. The modernization of Judaism repudiated the paradigmatic thinking of the received tradition.

In that tradition, the concept of history as we know it and as Scripture (not read within the Torah, but as part of the whole Torah) knows it surrenders to an altogether different way of conceiving time and change as well as the course of noteworthy, even memorable, social events. The past takes place in the present, for the present embodies the past. And there is no indeterminate future over the horizon, only a clear and present path to be chosen if people will it. With distinctions between past, present, and future time found to make no difference and, in their stead, dif-

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ferent categories of meaning and social order deemed self-evident, the Judaism of the dual Torah transforms ancient Israel's history into the categorical structure of eternal Israel's society, so that past, present, and future meet in the here and now.

In that construction of thought, as the Reformers recognized, history finds no place—time, change, the movement of events toward a purposive goal have no purchase, and a different exegesis of happenings supplants the conception of history. No place in Rabbinic thought, portrayed in successive documents examined severally and jointly, accommodates the notions of change and time, unique events and history, particular lives and biography.

ALAS, it is in the nature of a collection of essays to leave us wanting more in one spot, less in another. For Schorsch's book skirts these urgent issues; only one essay among the score, "The Emergence of Historical Consciousness in Modern Judaism," actually addresses the "turn to history." The others, being reprinted journal articles, treat conventional historical subjects, but not historical consciousness, e.g., "The Emergence of the Modern Rabbinate," "Jewish Academics at Prussian Universities," "Art as Social History: Moritz Oppenheim and the German Jewish Vision of Emancipation," "From Wolfenbuttel to Wissenschaft: The Divergent Paths of Isaak Markus Jost and Leopold Zunz," "Jewish Studies from 1818 to 1919," and the like. These are standard academic essays, and in few of them do the great themes introduced in the preface and treated in the cited essay play any part at all. So the book does not hold together very well or work on a single problem or argue on behalf of a cogent proposition.

But, I hasten to add, Schorsch presents his ideas in a well-documented way, with first-rate footnotes and clear evidence of substantial learning. The writing is academic in a less felicitous sense; every verb requires its adverb, every noun its adjective, so the prolixity of topics finds its match in a somewhat uneconomical prose. But overall, for the study of the intellectual modernization of Judaism, Schorsch has raised important questions and provided valuable data for investigating them.

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Reviewed by **Thomas K. Carr**

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onian Professor of Divinity Emeritus, stood before a packed lecture hall to deliver the first of seven lectures on the theme, "Heidegger and Christianity." Let it be said from the start that Macquarrie performed magisterially. To translate Heidegger's strange German coinages into Oxbridge idiom, to deconstruct his notorious obfuscations into edible bits, to relate to everyday experiences such famed Heideggerian abstractions as *Dasein* and "being-in-the-world": these are Promethean feats that Macquarrie carried out with great agility and care. Students of Heidegger will be happy to learn that a bolstered transcription of the lectures is now available in paperback.

THOMAS K. CARR *is Junior Dean of Oriel College, Oxford, and is presently an Adjunct Lecturer in Philosophy and Theology at Westminster College, Oxford.*

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OF THE SEVEN lectures (each of which comprises a separate chapter in the text), the first is biographical, covering Heidegger's career and early attempts at philosophical interpretation. The next two analyze *Being and Time*, each referring to one of the two main sections of Heidegger's magnum opus. Three chapters then follow that cover themes from Heidegger's more mature period, such as the threat of technology, the truth of art, and the revelatory powers of thought and language. And thus, despite the title of the book, only the seventh chapter is devoted specifically to Heidegger's religious position (or lack thereof). It is here that Macquarrie the theologian shows his real strength. He sets his analysis amidst a discussion of Heidegger's final acts of public communication. It was in this period that Heidegger uttered the famous phrase, so characteristically full of ambiguity, that became a kind of epithet after his death in 1976, "Only a god can save us."

Macquarrie has added to the public lectures a final chapter in which he tries to "tie up some loose ends." And it is probably this last that readers with a penchant for closet-skeletons will be tempted to turn to first, for it is only here that Macquarrie touches on the question that has plagued Heidegger scholarship ever since the 1987 publication of Victor Farias' *Heidegger et le nazisme*. This is not to say that Farias was the first to raise the issue of Heidegger's relation to and brief membership in the Nazi party. Heidegger's friend and colleague Karl Jaspers had published ten years prior his own rather detracting account. But since 1987 questioning the extent to which National Socialism entered into Heidegger's equations has been de rigueur among those wishing to treat him with any sort of seriousness. If held up to the present standard of criticism, Macquarrie disappoints. His handling of this thorny issue is cursory and dismissive and in my opinion all-too-defensive. But more on this below.

Although the seven chapters, generated initially as separate lectures, are relatively self-contained, they each refer in their own way to a single question that unifies the whole. It is in fact the same question that underlines the entire Heideggerian corpus (now over 100 volumes): "What is Being?" Or, to put it in Heidegger's own terms and thus more darkly, "What kind of 'thing' is the *is*-ness of things?"

A strange question this, for is not Being, though underscoring every genus, a genus-less "entity" and therefore indefinable? And, moreover, is not the meaning of Being for reasons of its absolute ubiquity so self-evident as to be beyond articulation? Yes, yes, yes . . . but Heidegger is a strange man who is most at home among strange, impossible questions.

He points out, following Aquinas, that an understanding of Being is always already included in everything we apprehend. This is an insight that had been grasped by Parmenides when he speculated, half a century before Plato, that Being and thinking were the same, that human thought cannot fail to be a thinking of Being, can only think what can exist. But ever since Plato's logocentric determination of the *Being of beings*, the Question of Being has been "forgotten" in favor of more rigorous, scientific modes of description. And the questioning of Being is far from scientific. Heidegger calls the search for the meaning of Being a "project"—by which he means that the human mind constantly projects its own meaning, possibilities, and expectations onto the nature of existence. Hence if any meaning is to be made of Being at all, one must go back, way back, behind centuries of projectional forgetfulness to recover the essential Parmenidean insight—an insight Heidegger contends is basic to human nature. On the strength of that insight we must posit human nature afresh, and this time be sure to posit it *authentically*.

LIKE Edmund Husserl before him, Heidegger makes human nature (*Dasein*) his methodological starting-point. For amid all the beings

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that together constitute the existing aggregate of things, there is one being that is ontologically privileged: the human. And the advantage consists precisely in the fact that humans alone experience existence as problematic, as angst-ridden in the span between an unwilled birth and an inevitable death. Only humans can rise to question Being, can endeavour to "think Being" and then voice what is thought.

But human being qua *Dasein* is literally a "being-there" (*Da* = "there," *Sein* = "being"), with the *Da* signifying the already interpreted world into which humans are "thrown." The essence of human nature, proclaims Heidegger in a phrase later exploited by Sartre, is always a product of existence, of being-in-the-world, which is to say the public world of societal norms and rituals. This "publicness," this "being-with-one-another," may be essential to the societal fabric, but it has devastating consequences for human nature as such. For in our "thrownness" into the groupthink of society we come to exist not on our own terms but on those of what Heidegger calls *das Man* (German for the generic subject)—the "they" whose beliefs and behaviors make up the "average everydayness" of human existence. Most of us prefer and thus naturally "fall" into this tempered mode of existence, are happy not to think for ourselves but to follow instead the routines and fashions of those around us.

If this is the Heideggerian diagnostic, what then is his proposed therapy? As Macquarrie lays it out, it is straightforward: salvation consists in the fundamental realization that "truth" exists not in the people and institutions among which we are thrown, but is in us as beings who question and think the nature of Being. For Heidegger, famously, truth is *aletheia*, the Greek *a*-privative signifying the "un-" as in "uncoveredness" or "un-concealment," meaning that truth is an "event" which happens—in Macquarrie's words—"when something is presented to us as it really is, without any concealment or distortion." The accent rides on the "to us," meaning that "the locus of truth is not the proposition, but *Dasein*, who is . . . the clearing within which Being presents itself." Truth is thus not the correspondence of propositions to what is the case, as it has been traditionally conceived, but is inextricably linked to human existence as a whole. "Before there was human existence," writes Heidegger, "there was no truth."

But not just any *Dasein* proves facile enough to clear space for truth's disclosure. It must be an authentic expression of human being, of human being in its freedom from *das Man*. In Heidegger's phrasing, "to forego normal choice and to adopt those offered me by the world or other people" is the essence of "inauthenticity." Inauthentic *Dasein* is most at home in the world of publicness—the world of rules, rituals, and conventions that disburdens existence of its personal responsibility

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for choice. In such a world, "everyone is the other and no one himself."

How then must we act to recover the authentic self we have lost by living in the world of the other? The therapy is simple: We must turn from living by the other's rules and habits and project a world of particular significance to ourselves. We must insist upon our right to be creative and free in our questioning and articulating of Being. True selves are such creative projections, existentially modifying the world into which they find they have been thrown. True Heideggerian selves emerge in their authenticity only on the basis of the continual possibility of recovering themselves from being lost in the world of things that are of no concern, and of creating worlds of meaning around those things that are.

Macquarrie describes this Heideggerian soteriology with such deft transparency that one finds oneself moving easily within the folds of his tacit agenda: namely, that the Heideggerian paradigm of original connection to Being, fallenness, and recovery through authentic choice plays well into the hands of theologians looking for an up-to-date vocabulary with which to clothe their dogmas. To this end Macquarrie suggests connections between Heidegger's doctrine of truth and the Gospel of John, "inauthenticity" and original sin, and "authenticity" and a doctrine of grace.

This is not a critique: Macquarrie is free to do what he wants with Heidegger, just as Tillich, Rahner, and Bultmann had done before him with highly original results. But it is to issue a caveat: we may not be getting the full Heidegger, the Heidegger who was rejected by both the Jesuits and his local bishop when he sought orders—who abandoned the faith of his birth for Protestantism, then abandoned faith altogether for Nietzsche, Hölderlin, and the Greek gods. Macquarrie does expose the more atheistic inferences one is likely to draw from Heidegger's attempt to question Being, and especially highlights the famed Heideggerian identity—against most orthodox formulas—of Being with time. But he does not stress enough the fact that Heidegger wished throughout his corpus to discourage any sort of transcendental interpretation. His teachings on Being, on fallenness and authenticity, on being-towards-death and freedom, are forms of post-theological discourse following on modernity's eclipse of God. There is a theological legacy here, to be sure, but Heidegger's world is strictly extra-theological and should not be treated otherwise. For Heidegger, as for Nietzsche before him, God is dead, or at least mortally wounded. It is the task then of "fundamental ontology" to find a suitable replacement.

WITH WHAT THEN did Heidegger replace God in the wake of God's departure? Art, for one thing. Macquarrie's commentary on Heidegger's seminal essay, "The Origin of the Work of Art" (1950), is one of the clearest discussions I have read on the work that marks the break between Heidegger's early and later periods. The famed Heideggerian *Kehre* or "turning" is more the product of scholarship than reality, but following 1945, the year the Americans imposed a half-decade teaching ban on Heidegger, there is a distinct change in both style and emphasis. One hears less and less of *Dasein* and more and more of Being. Being is the answer that is implied in the essay's title: Whence comes art? In the work of art, asserts Heidegger, the truth of Being "sets itself to work"; through the skilled hands of the artist, through the material causes of pigment, clay, and marble, through the ecstatic observance of art's appreciators, Being "gives itself," makes itself known, dwells among us in all its grace and truth.

In a celebrated passage that Macquarrie cites at length, Heidegger details his impression of Van Gogh's painting of a pair of peasant shoes. It illustrates well what Heidegger means when he says that a work of art "draws out into the open . . . the manifold reference of the thing it portrays":

> From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth. In the stiffly rugged heaviness of the shoes there is the accumulated tenacity of her slow trudge through the far-spreading and ever-uniform furrows of the field swept by a raw wind. . . . [The shoes] are pervaded by uncomplaining worry as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, the trembling before the impending childbed and shiver-

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ing at the surrounding menace of death.

Heidegger is here thinking deeply into the nature of what is presented in Van Gogh's painting, thinking to experience the deep inner quiddity, the "existential inscape" of a simple pair of shoes. But this more active element in interpretation only follows on the initiative taken by the painting itself. As Heidegger expresses it, "the painting *speaks*." "If there occurs in the work of art a disclosure of a particular being, disclosing what and how it is, then there is here an occurring, a happening of truth at work." What Heidegger seems to suggest, comments Macquarrie, is that the discovery of truth is not just the result of human striving, does not involve ridding the psyche of all distorting influences so as to hear the truth plainly, but is an event "above and beyond our willing and doing" in which Being gives itself to be known. This is especially so in such a heightened mode of existence as art. "The essence of art," writes Heidegger, "is this: the truth of beings setting itself to work."

Macquarrie goes on to show that Heidegger considered poetry to have first place among the arts, and poets to be modern incarnations of Hermes, busily running messages between heaven and earth. If God has withdrawn from creation to some safer enclave, the poet boldly attempts "to grasp the Father's lightening-flash / And to pass on, wrapped in song / The divine gift to the people" (Hölderlin). We are all called to be poets, says Heidegger, not necessarily in the sense of producing literature but rather of "dwelling poetically on the earth." While the major part of human existence is taken up with the routine affairs of work and family life, to be authentically human something more is needed. This "poetic dimension," as Macquarrie calls it, is a state of mind in which things are seen in the light of their Being, much as Van Gogh portrayed, and Heidegger understood, an entire world of human involvements in a simple pair of farming boots. We are each of us called to "name the holy" for ourselves and thus create spaces for God's return.

Macquarrie goes on—and I think rightly—to speculate just what sort of God might be expected to appear in the spaces we create with our poetic interpretations. Certainly not the God of orthodox Christianity. For if Being is in Heidegger's description a kind of ersatz divine principle—a debatable premise it must be said—and if Being, as noted above, is in some sense temporal, then this implies that God is also bound to time, to change, to the enigmatic whims of destiny. The Heideggerian God, if there is such a thing, is the result of a continual event of appropriation that itself reflects the evolution of human understanding. As human thought comes to comprehend the world with greater depth and sense of connectedness, so God becomes more. "God," wrote Rilke in similar tones, "is the final fruit of a tree whose leaves we are. . . . As bees collect honey, so we take what is sweetest out of everything and build Him." If Heidegger's project was never intended to build a conception of God, and certainly it was not, it at least establishes the philosophical justification for thinking that we, as authentic human beings, have at our disposal the means by which to do so. Apropos to Macquarrie's argument is his use of John Taylor's famous maxim to say that Heidegger's God "is not a God of all certainty but a God of all hope."

STILL, if one brackets the nonetheless important question as to where, if anywhere, Heidegger's substitute divinity resides in the registers of historical religion, there remains the perhaps more urgent query about the relation of his system to those ethical decisions that his—and our—time demands. In his "loose ends" chapter Macquarrie addresses the role the rise of National Socialism played in Heidegger's thought and, as I have said, treats it all too cursorily. It is true that in May of 1933 Heidegger joined the Nazi Party upon his appointment to the Rectorship of Freiburg University, succeeding a vehemently anti-Nazi colleague. It is true that his speeches during that period, though expressing support for the regime, contain nothing explicitly anti-Semitic. But it is not true to imply, as Macquarrie does, that Heidegger was neither aware of nor favored the more extreme policies of Nazism. In fact, evidence from the recently published Heidegger-Jaspers *Briefwechsel* suggests just the opposite. What is more, it appears from this evidence, as certain scholars have been suggesting all along, that it is the philosophy as well as the man that is to blame.

It is beyond the scope of this review to pursue the connections between Heidegger's philosophy of Being and his ardent if brief flirtation with National Socialism. I wish only to state that despite Macquarrie's fine presentation of the major themes in Heidegger's work, and despite his often engaging if not always successful argument that those themes "can be interpreted in a way that is compatible with Christian faith," there remains the nagging question whether a God who is thrown into the rough mix of human destiny is enough to prevent us from repeating the horrors of the Holocaust and Hiroshima. "Whether God is God," writes Heidegger, "is determined from and within the constellation of Being." But when the constellation of Being, one wants to ask, twists and turns into shapes too wicked to countenance, to what resource is one able to turn for aid if not to a Source who is in some sense beyond all twisting and turning?

BRIEFLY NOTED

THREE MESSENGERS FOR ONE GOD. By ROGER ARNALDEZ. Translated by Gerald W. Schlabach, Mary Louise Gude, and David B. Burrell. *University of Notre Dame Press. 219 pp. $29.95.*

This book was first published in French in 1983. Its author then held

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a chair in Islamics at the Sorbonne, and is one of the best historians of Islamic thought of his generation. The book's title may suggest that it presents one more tired variation on the theme all-religions-really-say-the-same-thing. But in fact it is an unusually subtle, elegant, and well-informed argument by a Catholic Christian to the conclusion that there is good reason to think that Jews, Christians, and Muslims are all worshipping and speaking about the same God. The strongest point of Roger Arnaldez's work is that he neither denies nor minimizes the obvious fact of deep theological differences among the traditions while making this argument—indeed, he celebrates it under Jacques Maritain's slogan "distinguer pour unit." The reasons he offers for his positive thesis have largely to do with points of convergence among the traditions in prophecy, ascetical practice, and theory of language. Whatever the merits of Arnaldez's argument on these points (and it is too complex to summarize here), his book provides a wealth of fascinating material about Islam coupled with a stimulating theological argument. Strongly recommended.

— Paul J. Griffiths

THE CHRISTIAN GOD. By RICHARD SWINBURNE. *Oxford University Press. 261 pp. $55 cloth, $22 paper.*

This book, according to its author, is about "the core Western doctrine of God" and "the Christian additions" to it. I have been tempted to end these comments: Enough said. Richard Swinburne is one of a recently identifiable group of persons skilled in the current techniques of English-language philosophy and mostly inhabiting philosophy departments who devote themselves to elucidating and defending Christian teaching. The enterprise can only be applauded. Swinburne, of Oxford University, has perhaps the most substantial achievement so far. The present work is the third of a tetralogy, preceded by *Responsibility* and *Atonement and Revelation.* One hopes that a second generation for the movement may develop a rather better sense for the actual religious moves and attitudes of the faith they want to expound, and a more historical way of reading texts. Swinburne's central intention in this book is to explain and assert the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. He supposes he is doing this when he establishes the general possibility and likelihood of "three divine individuals," indexed in more technical sections as G1, G2, and G3, who do not interfere with each other in their several exercises of omnipotence, etc., because two of them subsist by the will of one of them.

—Robert Jenson

THE UNEASY CENTER: REFORMED CHRISTIANITY IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA. By PAUL K. CONKIN. *University of North Carolina Press. 326 pp. $39.94 cloth, $16.95 paper.*

In an age of multiculturalism, which demands attention (sometimes justly, sometimes capriciously) for the previously neglected, it is useful not to forget the subjects that once stood at the center. Paul Conkin's primer on America's main traditions of Reformed Protestantism accomplishes that worthy goal nicely. As a reminder of where things came from, he starts with a capsule summary of Christian theology before the Reformation and a longer outline for the English Reformation. The main event is thorough treatment of Congregational, Presbyterian, and Methodist traditions, the side shows substantial attention to German Reformed, Episcopalians, and Dutch Reformed. (Only treatment of Baptists seems disproportionately small.) Again unfashionably, but also helpfully, Conkin emphasizes elite intellectual and theological culture. Illuminating coverage extends as well to subjects like Sunday Schools and hymn-writing. To be sure, not everyone will accept all of Conkin's value judgments. For example, solid sections on Charles Hodge and Horace Bushnell treat the latter as the more serious intellect, despite the evidence Conkin himself presents. (During the era of the Civil War, when fine shades of opinion on questions like republicanism or the meaning of the Bible spilled blood, Hodge took human sin seriously, while Bushnell built a career out of systematic imprecision.) Yet even those who question some of Conkin's judgments should admire this book's ability to summarize what was once widely acknowledged as America's most influential intellectual tradition.

—Mark A. Noll

THE SWORD OF IMAGINATION: MEMOIRS OF A HALF-CENTURY OF LITERARY CONFLICT. By RUSSELL KIRK. *Eerdmans. 504 pp. $29.99.*

There is no disputing that some thoughtful people found his pose as a nineteenth-century literary person insufferably contrived. But these memoirs indicate that Russell Kirk was quite prepared to take that risk. Not only his words but his entire persona was a rebuke to a modern world that had, in his view, quite simply gone mad. He was an incorrigible romantic, drawing "the sword of imagination" against a debased culture that had, as Livy said of the late empire, fallen in love with death. That, he insisted, is what happens to cultures that break off the conversation with the cult from which they emerged, that lose their sense of dramatic participation in the transcendent, and of accountability to the Permanent Things mandated by the transcendent. Tirelessly, and some thought tediously, Kirk returned again and again to the Permanent Things. This romantic posture was first effectively struck in *The Conservative Mind* (1953), which received a surprisingly sympathetic response in an intellectual world that was drunk on novelty and uncritically convinced that Lionel Trilling was right in dismissing conservatism as irritable mental gestures pretending to be ideas. From there, with more than a little help from his columnistic association with *National Review*, Russell Kirk built an independent life as the Lord of Piety Hill, Michigan, to which disciples were drawn for more than

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forty years, until Kirk's death in 1994 at age seventy-five. These memoirs—which, in a typically Kirkian eccentricity, refer to the author in the third person singular—conclude with the passage from *All's Well that Ends Well* indicating that only the humble pass through the narrow gate into eternity. The implication may seem less than humble, until one recognizes that Kirk's life and work exhibits a remarkably playful modesty. Not, of course, that he was not serious about his life and work, but he knew that the conflicts engaged were so utterly serious that any excessive seriousness on his part could only seem trivial, even silly, by comparison. His manner was not to everybody's taste, but nobody who really wants to understand the strains of an intellectual conservatism that is now in the ascendancy should miss the instruction, and the pleasure, of *The Sword of Imagination.*

— *Janet Marsden*

NEW DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY. Edited by DAVID J. ATKINSON et al. *InterVarsity Press. 918 pp. $39.99.*

Mark Noll and others have written persuasively on the scandal of the evangelical mind, or the lack thereof. This is another in a series of substantial reference works from InterVarsity that aims at remedying that by "joining mind to heart." With over 700 articles, this book provides a judicious and well-informed overview of questions in ethical dispute. Most articles tend to slight the history of Christianity prior to the nineteenth century, but it is nonetheless a very useful resource, and not only for evangelical Protestants.

RETHINKING LIFE AND DEATH: THE COLLAPSE OF OUR TRADITIONAL ETHICS. By PETER SINGER. *St. Martin's. 255 pp. $22.95.*

The author of *Animal Liberation* is perhaps the most celebrated intellectual proponent of the view that contemporary society should abandon traditional ideas about the uniqueness of Homo sapiens. Animals, he contends, may have a stronger moral claim upon legal protection than human beings at stages of early development or later deterioration. On the dust jacket, Derek Humphry, founder of the Hemlock Society, says the book "is a blast of fresh thinking that will attract great controversy and debate." The argument for abortion, euthanasia, and related practices is not fresh, but it is more candidly stated here than is usually the case. Singer's presentation of familiar arguments has the merit of recognizing that the position he advances is a frontal assault on the moral and civilizational presuppositions of Western culture. For that reason, combined with his cavalier treatment of the history of the philosophical and moral questions he raises, the book is not likely to occasion "great controversy and debate." The philistine's claim that there is a barbarian alternative to civilization is not likely to shock sensible people to whom that hardly comes as news. Singer does correctly contend that foundational ideas about the sanctity of life and human rights are products of Christian teaching. His argument, therefore, is consistently and explicitly anti-Christian. The publishers note that Mr. Singer is the author of the major article on ethics in the current *Encyclopedia Britannica,* which says something about the decline of that once great institution.

ON THE TEACHING AND WRITING OF HISTORY. By BERNARD BAILYN. *University Press of New England. 97 pp. $15.95.*

Musings on the craft of history by one of the most distinguished historians of early America. Prof. Bailyn is a commonsense sort of scholar, and he avoids grand theoretical statements concerning his discipline. Good history, he suggests, is produced by intelligent and imaginative people who dig hard in the sources, write well, and maintain strict respect for the otherness of the past. He regrets, but has no real solution for, the fact that the increasing specialization of history makes the writing of large-scale analytical narratives ever more problematic. As to fashionable relativisms concerning the impossibility of pure objectivity, he is admirably trenchant: "The fact that there is no such thing as perfect antisepsis does not mean that one might as well do brain surgery in a sewer." All in all, a useful exercise in scholarly demystification.

ON BEING A JEW: A REFORM PERSPECTIVE. By DOW MARMUR. *Holy Blossom Temple (Toronto). 194 pp. $14.95 paper.*

Reform Judaism in Canada has been far less affected by political correctness and the Zeitgeist than has the very liberal Reform movement in the United States. This collection of essays by a distinguished Reform rabbi in Canada exhibits that older brand of sober, cautious liberalism that today is usually called conservatism (or at least neoconservatism). Much of the best analysis here concerns the dangerous anarchy of liberal religion and the simultaneous impossibility (and undesirability) of a simple return to tradition. Rabbi Marmur's suggestions for unifying the different branches of Judaism are unlikely to be enacted, but they should stimulate thoughtful discussion. Also instructive is his description of Judaism as a unique blending of religion, ethnicity, and landbound nationalism.

THE CRUELTY OF HERESY. By C. FITZSIMONS ALLISON. *Morehouse. 197 pp. $12.95 paper.*

Subtitled "an affirmation of Christian orthodoxy," this is a bracing call by an Episcopalian bishop to recognize that heresy, so often peddled in the name of sensitivity and compassion, does awful things to the moral and spiritual life of Christians. Written with high style, and laced with telling anecdotes, it is a book worthy of attention well beyond the bounds of Anglicanism. Indeed, one cannot think of a church in which its message is not sorely needed.

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CHRISTIANITY THAT COUNTS. By DOUGLAS GROOTHUIS. *Baker. 224 pp. $11.99 paper.*

In a series of twenty-seven brief essays, Professor Groothuis continues the analysis of contemporary fads and fallacies in the name of religion that he had begun in his prior books. In *Christianity That Counts*, however, he consistently relates his analysis to the fundamentals of Christian faith. New Age spirituality, ecological mysticism, triumphal relativism, and the commercialization of religious symbols are held one by one to the touchstone of an authentic faith and found to be false metal.

RECLAIMED POWERS: MEN AND WOMEN IN LATER LIFE. By DAVID GUTMANN. *Northwestern University Press. 310 pp. $16.95 paper.*

A second edition of the brilliant 1987 analysis of aging, this book argues that aging is not decay but growth into new potencies and new pleasures. The "parental crisis" requires that adults fulfill certain roles for the sake of the endurance of the species. But once their rearing of children is past, adults may find—if they do not fall prey to myths about decay and weakness—that there are open to them for the first time fully adult experiences and activities.

OUR COUNTRY, OUR CULTURE: THE POLITICS OF POLITICAL CORRECTNESS. Edited by EDITH KURZWEIL and WILLIAM PHILLIPS. *Partisan Review. 298 pp. $12.50.*

After all the anecdotal books about the imposition of political correctness, *Partisan Review*—the famous old journal of the 1950s New York Intellectuals—has gathered a collection of thirty-two essays that assume the reality of imposed political rectitude and seek to analyze its role and effect in American culture. The essayists range from such well-known conservatives as Hilton Kramer and Glenn Loury to such well-known liberals as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. But all the essayists decry the emergence of what Steven Marcus calls the "soft totalitarianism" of political correctness. The novelist Doris Lessing in her marvelous essay on "Unexamined Mental Attitudes Left Behind by Communism" and the classicist Mary Lefkowitz in her "Multiculturalism, Uniculturalism, or Anticulturalism?" trace some of the historical roots of political correctness, while Jerry L. Martin and the philosopher John Searle demolish its philosophical pretensions. The entire collection is highly recommended.

GOOD ORDER. Edited by BRAD MINER. *Simon & Schuster. 297 pp. $15 paper.*

The disagreements between neoconservatives and paleoconservatives can be quite sharp, but there is nonetheless a familial unity to the two camps of conservatism. In *Good Order*, Mr. Miner—former literary editor of *National Review*—selects thirteen brief readings that express the positions on the spiritual, social, economic, political, and cultural orders agreed to by nearly all conservative authors, neo- and paleo- alike. The essayists range from G. K. Chesterton to George Will, and include several FIRST THINGS' authors. Mr. Miner's anthology is neither a handbook of general conservative theory nor a catalogue of specific conservative policy proposals. It is rather a first-rate introduction to the middle ground of the conservative imagination as it grapples with our most pressing public concerns.

HAYEK ON HAYEK: AN AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL DIALOGUE. By F. A. HAYEK. Edited by STEPHEN KRESGE and LEIF WENAR. *University of Chicago Press. 170 pp. $27.50.*

The best of all possible lives for a thinker is to write for the future and then live long enough to see himself proved right. The great economist F. A. Hayek was ignored and even reviled by the Keynesian proponents of government spending during his early and middle years, but the long run he made of life enabled him to see the world turn back to his ideas. The editors of this volume have put together an odd work, cobbling together the fragments of autobiography Hayek occasionally composed and piecing them out with interviews. But, until an imaginative scholar with skill in both history and economics comes along with a complete biography of Hayek, this

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will remain the best account of the economist's life and times.

Odd Angles of Heaven: Contemporary Poetry by People of Faith. Edited by David Craig and Janet McCann. *Harold Shaw. 311 pp. $14.99 paper.*

Good poets write good poetry, and religious poets write religious poetry, and sometimes religious poets are also good poets—and then we get glimpses of the glory of God. Gathered from the previously published work of seventy contemporary poets, all the poems in this anthology are religious, and several of the poems are good. Not suprisingly, however, the good poems are from good poets. There is good work here from lesser-known poets: Bruce Bawer, David Citino, Raymond Oliver, Jill P. Baumgaertner (First Things' own poetry editor). But most of the first-rate pieces are from well-known sources: Wendell Berry, X. J. Kennedy, Denise Levertov, William Stafford, Richard Wilbur, Charles Wright. The editors have put together a fine anthology and a good introduction to contemporary religious poetry.

Vanishing Boundaries: The Religion of Mainline Protestant Baby Boomers. By Dean R. Hoge, Benton Johnson, and Donald A. Luidens. *Westminster/John Knox. 254 pp. $17.99 paper.*

In a book-length treatment of the research they first presented in First Things (March 1993), the authors provide statistical analysis of mainline Protestantism's enormous decline over the last three decades. Interviews with Presbyterian baby boomers, the churched and unchurched alike, make for grim reading, and the authors are not sanguine about the future of the mainline Protestant churches—though they do offer, in conclusion, some interesting suggestions about the necessity for a return to a biblical and theological faith.

Dictionary of Christian Art. By Diane Apostolos-Cappadona. *Continuum 376 pp. $39.50.*

A straightforward, alphabetical guide to Christian visual art, especially of the Renaissance. The major symbols, biblical references, artists, and works are all briefly described, which makes this book a boon to viewers looking for the background knowledge necessary for forming critical opinions. The book contains no surprises, which is a blessing in this sort of student's guide.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

A Sense of Change Both Ominous and Promising

The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), with about a million members, arises out of the Restoration Movement launched by Alexander Campbell (1788-1866). The body was formed by a merger between Barton W. Stone's "Christians" and Campbell's "Disciples" in 1832, and it was at one time the fastest-growing Protestant denomination in the country. We mention this because the March issue of its magazine, *Touchstone*, has extensive coverage of agitations occasioned by the 1994 declaration "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" (ECT)—agitations that have their parallel in other parts of the myriad worlds of evangelical Protestantism. Frederick W. Norris of the Emmanuel School of Religion in Tennessee suggests that the last time Disciples took such a serious look at Roman Catholicism was when Campbell debated Bishop John Purcell of Cincinnati in 1837.

Touchstone is well aware that some evangelicals are exceedingly unhappy with the declaration. For instance, Dave Hunt, author of best-selling books such as *The Seduction of Christianity*, writes: "The most significant event in almost five hundred years of church history took place March 29, 1994. . . . I neither impugn the motives nor question the salvation of the evangelical signers. Yet I believe the document represents the most devastating blow against the gospel in at least one thousand years." Professor Norris remembers his grandfather saying, "Roman Catholics are lying liberals. They pervert Scripture, but never acknowledge that they do." "In the 1990s," writes Norris, "there are not only differences in our approaches to Catholics, but also developments within Roman Catholicism itself. The Roman Catholic Church that once regularly burned dissenters now officially finds Christians outside itself to be brothers and sisters in error. Not killing each other is a great gain. . . . 'Evangelicals and Catholics Together' emphasizes much of what we share in faith and many ways in which we may pray and work together for good. Neglecting such opportunities is sinful; seizing them is a mark of those who worship a gracious God."

Touchstone editor Simon J. Dahlman observes that ECT "is little more than the published hopes and dreams of a small group of influential church leaders." "So why did ECT gain so much attention?" he asks. "Why are books and magazines, including this one, devoting thousands of words to the subject of evangelical-Catholic relations? The reason is that this is a grassroots movement, often the most powerful—and, in a way, uncontrollable—kind. Church history is full of names like Francis, Luther, Wesley, Campbell, Stone—people whose monumental contributions began with no official sanction but with faith and thought that inspired thought (or ignited fury) around the world. So even if the current talk about cooperation between Catholics and Protestants is not official, it has the potential of influencing churches and history in years to come." Dahlman's own advice is that of Gamaliel in Acts 5: "If this plan is of men, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to stop them. You might even be found opposing God."

Now the Book

In the past year, many articles, several books, and a number of evangelical radio and television programs have attacked ECT vigorously, and sometimes venomously. Word, the large Texas-based evangelical house, has now published *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: Toward a Common Mission* ($14.95 paper), which includes essays by a number of participants in ECT (Charles Colson, Avery Dulles, James Packer, Mark Noll, George Weigel, and this writer). It has not escaped notice that ECT has generated very little controversy among Catholics. That is no doubt because Catholics are long accustomed to ecumenical initiatives, and have no difficulty in acknowledging that non-Catholic Christians are brothers and sisters in Christ who, by virtue of baptism and faith, are "truly but

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imperfectly in communion with the Catholic Church" (Vatican Council II).

As Packer's essay underscores with particular effectiveness, the situation is very different with evangelical Protestants. For most evangelicals, the Catholic Church has been understood as the enemy of the Gospel and even as the Antichrist. In that view, it is the duty of Protestants to convert Catholics to the true faith and work for the extirpation of "the papal system" from the face of the earth. To many readers such language will sound impossibly antiquated, but that is because they have not paid respectful attention to what many evangelical Christians believe, and believe deeply. Catholics and liberal Protestants, who tend to take ecumenical engagement for granted, are inclined to be condescending toward evangelicals. Such condescension is both unwarranted and fiercely resented by evangelicals. It is not true that evangelicals are simply playing ecumenical catch-up. As I contend in my contribution to the book, they frequently bring to this engagement a biblical and theological urgency that is typically not found among liberal Protestants and is too often missing among Catholics. Catholics, too, have much to learn from this encounter, and one hopes they will be reading and discussing *Evangelicals and Catholics Together.*

ECT is neither the best nor the worst thing that has happened in the last five hundred years of Christian history, never mind the last one thousand years. But, to judge by the response to it in the past year, it is something of potentially great historic importance. A respected evangelical theologian who wishes to remain anonymous has said: "I pray that what you and your colleagues have done is pleasing to God. I cannot praise or condemn it. I expect that this may change forever what generations of Bible-believing Protestants have thought was their mission in relation to Roman Catholicism. I pray that you are right. I tremble to think that you may be wrong." That ominous sense of what is at stake is not uncommon among evangelicals, and it should be more evident among Catholics, as we reflect together on the Christian mission in the Third Millennium.

FT

The Creativity of Tina Brown

When Harold Ross launched the *New Yorker* in 1925, the line was that it is not edited for the little lady in Dubuque. In fact, it was edited precisely for her, and for myriad other middlebrow Americans who felt themselves to be in exile from New York, from the center of fashion, the arts, and clever opinion. On coffee tables throughout Middle America, the display of the *New Yorker* was a statement that the people who live here are not defined by the hinterland to which fate has consigned them; they are in touch with the larger world. Is there a bathroom or den in any university town in America that is not graced with Saul Steinberg's *New Yorker* cover of a map showing Manhattan as the center of the world?

For more than sixty years, the magazine demonstrated a genteel genius for providing the sensation of being safely sophisticated, not entirely removed from cultural and intellectual chic. Then Tina Brown was brought over from *Vanity Fair* to inaugurate a new era, to lift up the stones and expose another New York, presumably a more real New York of strident leftist partisanship, of polymorphous perversities, of flaunted contempt for those Americans to whom Harold Ross pitched his product. As she had turned *Vanity Fair* into vanity most foul, Ms. Brown quickly turned the *New Yorker* into the *Village Voice*, forcing that rag to find a yet sleazier niche. The editorial goal of the *New Yorker*, said William Shawn, Ross's hand-picked successor, was to honor the "genuine, authentic, real, and true," and to scorn the "specious, spurious, meretricious, and dishonest." Today the specious, spurious, meretricious, and dishonest pretty well summarizes what Tina Brown is doing with the magazine.

Ms. Brown and those she has brought on board to create the new *New Yorker* are of the arrested adolescent school of journalism in which "creativity" never gets beyond self-congratulatory daring in defying putative taboos. It is a difficult enterprise to maintain in a time when taboos lie strewn across the cultural battlefield, but Ms. Brown, being British, knows that there is still a giggle to be milked from an audience that only vaguely remembers what was supposed to be sacred about the institutions and ideas now so casually mocked. Witness the former Church of England as an object of British humor, or television's Bennie Hill dropping his pants, which is always good for a hearty har-har from a people once held up to Americans as the embodiment of sophistication.

Quickly into her tenure as editor, a *New Yorker* cover pictured a Hasidic Jew making out with a sexy black lady. That occasioned much comment in the local press, and at the dinner tables of the chattering classes Ms. Brown was remarked as a lady of great daring. Soon, an acquaintance observed a while ago, the *New Yorker* would have cartoons (the magazine insists upon calling them "drawings") with naked people in bed. Sure enough, that very week such a cartoon appeared, the subject being, if we recall, impotence. Look for the appearance of more *New*

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Yorker cartoons in men's washrooms. Also outstanding in the trash department have been long articles by David Remnick, who had earlier written a fine book about the collapse of Soviet Communism in which he evidenced great insight and respect for Jews and Judaism. In his more recent efforts, Remnick has deployed his talents in bashing the Pope and celebrating Elaine Pagel's polemical outbursts against Christian hangups about good and evil.

Call It Tacky

Among the other instances of "creativity" at the new *New Yorker,* the cover of the issue coinciding with Holy Week this year was notable. It was a crude cartoon of an Easter bunny crucified on an IRS return. Unlike the cover with the amorous Hasid, this occasioned little comment locally. One might think that has something to do with the Jewish presence in New York publishing, but it possibly has more to do with people having become accustomed to Ms. Brown's juvenile delinquencies. It's just Tina being daring again, don't you know. The cover was titled "The Theology of the Tax Cut," and the editors explained that it is "a pointed allegory about faith, fantasy, and the politics of the moment." Uh huh.

Of course the Catholic League protested, as well it should have, but not much attention was paid to such "special interests" that object to the trashing of the most sacred symbol of the faith of the great majority of Americans. Can't those people take a joke? The cartoonist, Art Spiegelman, said he didn't know why the Catholic League was upset, since all he was trying to do was criticize Republican proposals for a tax cut that would "crucify" the average American. Ah well, that's different. We thought it was an egregious trashing of the cross of Christ but, now that Mr. Spiegelman explains that it was all in the good cause of scoring a partisan point against those dreadful Republicans, that puts it in a quite different light. A press release issued by the magazine further explained the significance of the Spiegelman cover: "The image suggests that a collision of secular and religious ideologies has come to dominate the national conversation of the moment." It does not say which is crucifying which.

For the Christmas issue, Mr. Spiegelman had done a cover of a urinating Santa Claus, but Ms. Brown killed it. Some things are still sacred, after all. As for the crucified rabbit, the highfalutin' talk about "a pointed allegory" was undermined when the *New York Observer* noted that *Hustler* magazine had published a similar cover in 1978 showing a plush bunny nailed to the cross. After overtaking the *Village Voice,* Ms. Brown, it seems, is now aspiring to compete with *Hustler.* Toward that end, the April 1 issue featured Annie Leibovitz photos of the crowd around the O. J. Simpson trial, including a shirtless Kato Kaelin blowdrying his hair, and a bare-bottomed Paula Barbieri. How far will the daring Tina Brown dare to go?

Ms. Brown may know what she is doing, however. Dubuque isn't what it used to be either. While I was lecturing recently at a college in that vicinity, my hostess mentioned Ms. Brown's magazine and allowed that, "spiritually speaking," she really lived in New York. The house did have that cretinous air about it. On the other hand, the circulation of the *New Yorker* is no evidence that people care for it very much. The subscription price of sixteen dollars per year is a little less than thirty cents per issue, which is considerably under production and mailing costs. They are in fact paying people to let the thing into their homes in order to maintain a circulation that attracts advertisements that are as sumptuously vulgar as is the content of the magazine plain vulgar. Specious, spurious, meretricious, and dishonest. That is what Messrs. Ross and Shawn said the *New Yorker* must never be, and what, under Tina Brown, it has become. The more contemporary term is tacky.

FT

A Journal of Excellence

What a delight to have something to recommend unreservedly. *Pro Ecclesia* is far and away the best journal of theology published in this country today. It is a scholarly journal, of course, but for its type it is refreshingly accessible to the nonspecialist. Published under mainly Lutheran auspices, it is ecumenical and bills itself as "a journal of catholic and evangelical theology." We've said good things about *Pro Ecclesia* before, but then out comes a new quarterly issue and it seems necessary to say them again.

In the Spring 1995 issue we have Mark Noll and Lyman Kellstedt on the future of evangelicalism. They use David Bebbington's scheme of marks that identify evangelicalism: conversionism (an emphasis on the new birth as a life-changing experience), biblicism (reliance on the Bible as ultimate authority), activism (a commitment to evangelizing), and crucicentrism (a focus on Christ's redeeming work on the cross, usually pictured as the only way of salvation). Noll and Kellstedt may overestimate the size of evangelicalism, including as they do millions of Lutherans and others who may not be comfortable in that camp. They rightly underscore, however, the role that a relatively small group of Dutch Calvinists have played in modern evangelicalism, providing it with "a heritage of serious academic work and

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experienced philosophical reasoning," as well as producing some of the major publishers (Baker, Eerdmans, Zondervan) who enabled evangelicals to communicate after they had been shut out of the New York publishing world in the 1920s. The more polemical side of the Calvinist heritage has also played a big part in criticism of irenic initiatives such as the declaration "Evangelicals and Catholics Together."

Examining the demography and cultural influence of evangelicals, Noll and Kellstedt observe that "there may be a grain of truth to at least the first two-thirds of Michael Weisskopf's assertion in the *Washington Post* that the grassroots supporters of the Religious Right are 'largely poor, uneducated, and easy to command.'" In their view, the foreseeable passing of Billy Graham from the scene hangs like a huge cloud over American evangelicalism. His has been an inestimably powerful influence containing the centrifugal forces within an evangelicalism that, they believe, is not nearly so unified as either its friends or critics have usually assumed.

Conclusion: "In the end, it is difficult to characterize periods when cultures or movements experience escalating centrifugal force. North American evangelicalism seems, at the end of the twentieth century, to be living in such an era. Such times have often disoriented religious believers (as during the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, or the First World War). But such times have also, on occasion, witnessed evangelical renewal, as in the ninth- and thirteenth-century revivals of Roman Catholic monasticism. Historians of evangelicalism may be excused hope for the future, since to study evangelical history is to be regularly reminded that great social, economic, political, and religious confusion characterized the era when John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and George Whitefield first brought evangelicalism into the world." When evangelicalism is construed so broadly, even to include medieval monasticism, the prospects for its staying power seem considerably improved.

Those Neocons

In the same issue, George Weigel writes on "The Neoconservative Difference: A Proposal for the Renewal of Church and Society." It is in largest part about the work of Michael Novak, Weigel, and this scribe, who has to fess up and say that we considered publishing the Weigel article but it seemed too self-referential for these pages. It is, nonetheless, an admirable summation and analysis of "neoconservatism," mainly in the Catholic context but with critically important connections to sectors of Protestantism and American Judaism. Weigel's conclusion: "That the 'neo-conservative difference' in American Catholicism has been deeply influenced by John Paul II should be plain. For we have seen in the Holy Father's ministry and teaching a model of the Catholicism to whose development we would wish to contribute our best intellectual energies. God willing, there will be many more years of direct inspiration from John Paul. But the mark that this pope has left on the Church seems likely to be an enduring one. And thus the effort to develop the distinctive neoconservative approach to the renewal of church and society will continue . . . for some time to come."

One might respond that the term neoconservative will only be useful so long as other labels—liberal, progressive, traditionalist, restorationist—stay more or less in place. There is always talk about how such labels are no longer meaningful, but such talk, one fears, is usually wishful thinking. Ask people to respond to a list of typically disputed questions, and, with distressing predictability, most everybody ends up in the ideational category where you expected them to end up. Maybe we should not think it distressing. After all, people who pride themselves on being unpredictable in their views usually haven't thought about things very carefully. Transcending categories, like obsessive open-mindedness, is itself a category that is, more often than not, easily placeable on the left of the ideational spectrum. To be sure, the people who are predictable often haven't thought about things very carefully, either, although those who have thought about things very carefully usually are, more or less, predictable. In any event, an inclination to rebel against the categories is probably a healthy thing—unless the category in question is so very reflective and persuasive as George Weigel's description of neoconservatism.

Moving Baseline

In the same issue, "Crossing the Threshold of Rome" by Jeffrey Silleck is a Lutheran pondering Protestant dilemmas in the face of the surprising vitality of Catholicism. Silleck doesn't indicate that he's thinking about crossing the threshold into full communion with Rome, but the suggestion is that there's not much "there" there to a Protestantism that is living in reaction to where Rome was. He writes: "There is a profound symbiotic relationship between Roman Catholicism and the Reformation tradition. The caricatures which each has of the other, and of their own position, do not do justice to the dependence which all of Christianity has upon Rome and the gift which the Reformation offers that church. . . . So it should be of some note, if not alarm, to the Reformation tradition that there is real change, movement, and momentum of direction in Roman Catholicism. The symbiosis between these two bodies is disrupted by the change in either. If one is redefined, the other must do the same to survive. The Reformation tradition is in danger of living in response to a tradition that simply is not

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there any longer. The Second Vatican Council signalled a change so enormous and so profound and so different than either liberal Catholics or conservative Catholics portray it to be, that all of Christianity is shaken to the roots. The Reformation tradition since the Council has cast about in the areas of pastoral theology, praxis/justice/political theology, fundamentalism and unitive/ecumenical theology searching for that defining niche and role in the greater Christian church. With the Council, Rome was moving and everybody else was left searching to find the direction of that movement. This pope has probably answered that question of direction for the foreseeable future."

One may very much wonder whether, in order to survive, Catholicism must redefine itself in response to what Silleck depicts as the flounderings of Protestantism. That would seem to be a self-destructive course, and certainly not the direction pointed by this pope. But Silleck's ruminations do underscore the way in which Catholicism is the doctrinal and ecclesial baseline for other Christians (not so much, it should be noted, for the Orthodox). A baseline—the known measure by which others are measured and measure themselves—is required if "Christianity" is to be a determinate reality through time. The baseline may be viewed with respect or resentment, with admiration or hostility, or a mix of all these and other sentiments, but it cannot be ignored. Protestantism is defined in distinction from Catholicism in a way that Catholicism is not defined in distinction from Protestantism. It follows that Protestantism requires a much weightier defining distinction. The relationship between the two, one might suggest to Silleck, is not so much "symbiotic" as it is based upon the difference, ecclesially speaking, between the constitutive and the derivative. In the absence of a defining difference that compels separation from the baseline, people can invent a defining difference (anti-Catholics are adept at doing that) or they can explore the various alternative meanings of "crossing the threshold of Rome." But those responsible for this excellent "journal of catholic and evangelical theology" already know that. Christians of a catholic sensibility cannot be content with belonging to an ecclesial "niche." (*Pro Ecclesia*, Box 327, Delhi, NY 13753. $25 per year.)

FT

PRIMROSE PATHS

Taki, that irreverent chronicler of the low life of high society, has observed that in recent years American men have been unpleasantly surprising their friends by coming out of the closet in mid-life, while the Brits had the much more sensible approach of getting pederasty out of their system at public school and then getting on with life. That seems to be changing now as OutRage, the British edition of our ACT-UP, has started "outing" prominent public figures. Peter Tatchell, head of OutRage, was himself "outed" after a failed Labor campaign for Parliament, and has since been getting even by outing others. Apparently under pressure from OutRage, David Hope, Anglican Bishop of London, has publicly declared his "ambiguous sexuality," while averring that he has lived a life of chaste celibacy. The development generated public outrage at OutRage and a great deal of sympathy for Hope, who has subsequently been named Archbishop of York.

Without knowing the details of Hope's circumstance, it is regrettable that his public statement seems to lend credence to the simplistic straight/gay bipolarity that is the stock in rage of gay activism and by which Hope declares himself "ambiguous." Sexual desires and stimuli, one might suggest, have always been an ambiguous affair, and people should not be put in the position of publicly rating themselves on a Kinsey-like scale of one to six. Nobody, apart from the prurient, should care about the bishop's nocturnal fantasies. They are nobody's business but God's and, possibly, his spiritual director's. Prurience is from *prurire*, meaning to itch, and pandering to the prurient can only magnify the irritation. But we may be naive in thinking that it is still possible to maintain the distinction between public and private upon which discretion, and decency, depend.

Basil Cardinal Hume of Westminster also got caught in the crossfire generated by OutRage's guerilla warfare. Mr. Tatchell had been demanding that Hume back down from Rome's definition of homosexual acts as "objectively disordered." The demanding became violent at times, including the disruption of the Palm Sunday procession at Westminster Cathedral. In what was perceived to be response to the pressure, the Cardinal issued a letter that said homosexual friendship can be "a way of loving," and declared that "homophobia should have no place among Catholics." The papers predictably headlined the Cardinal's "capitulation" to gay pressure groups. Even the conservative *Telegraph* put on the front page, "Cardinal Hume gives Church blessing to homosexual love." Mr. Tatchell declared, perhaps with justification, "We are setting the agenda." In fact, the Cardinal explicitly reaffirmed the Church's teaching on homosexuality. But the reaffirmation was surrounded by language of such painful "sensitivity" that, despite the Cardinal's intention, the statement was easily exploited by those who wanted to interpret it as a

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wink and nudge toward homosexual license.

A Choice of Sins

Gay activists and the tabloid press were not the only ones prone to exploit the statement. The *Tablet*, a liberal Catholic weekly, editorialized, "Homosexual Catholics have a difficult path to tread, and as they make their way along it they are entitled to the Church's spiritual support. That is what the Cardinal has supplied them with, in abundance." Nothing at all wrong with that, it would seem, but the *Tablet* went on. It noted that "among men and women of a heterosexual disposition" (disposition?) friendship can have a natural destiny in marriage, but this is denied to "couples of the same sex." They may take comfort, however, from "the humane tone and tolerant content of the Cardinal's statement." The traditional advice, the editor notes, is to avoid "occasions of sin," but all human loving is capable of flawed and sinful expression. Then this: "Those homosexuals who are over-fearful of sexual sin will shun human intimacy altogether, which is a course fraught with the risk of spiritual and psychological harm. That too would be an occasion of sin, of a different kind."

Others may be able to parse that differently, but it appears to say that being "over-fearful of sexual sin" is at least as great a danger as sexual sin, the avoidance of which may itself be an occasion of sin. Given the choice between one kind of sin or another, one can hardly blame people for going with the more immediately attractive. As the editor says, "Homosexual Catholics have a difficult path to tread," and it is made more difficult by the *Tablet*'s confused construal of the Cardinal's statement, according to which the path is primrose all the way. What is applauded as humane tone and tolerant content can, despite best intentions, result in the kindness that kills. A century later, in a time of plague, the words of Robert Louis Stevenson assume a different connotation: "Life is over, life was gay: We have come the primrose way."

Churchmen are understandably anxious that they not be perceived to be condoning hypocrisy. They rightly fear coming under an indictment such as Shakespeare's in *Hamlet*: "Do not, as some ungracious pastors do, / Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven, / Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine, / Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads, / And recks not his own rede." One way to escape that indictment is to reck our own rede, to follow the counsel we give to others. Better yet, since we all fail in various ways to reck our own rede, is to proclaim ever more clearly that the Church is a community of forgiven sinners. In response to accusations—whether about sexual or other sins—the most curious and contradictory thing for Christians to do is to become embroiled in redefining sin. There is no need for it. There is no logic to it. Worse, we end up confirming people in the error of believing that, if so many otherwise nice people do something, it cannot be wrong. Worst of all, we end up denying the need for forgiveness, and therefore the need for the One who forgives. The primrose path is a course of denial, and it is a cruel kindness that blesses anyone's going that way.

FT

ARTISTIC FREEDOM AND FREEDOM

"There will always be some conflict between the worlds of religion and art, a world that cherishes unquestioned faith in fundamental beliefs and a world that is bound only by individual creativity." Such is the editorial wisdom proffered by the *Free Press* of Mankato, Minn. It was prompted by the refusal of Bethany Lutheran College to exhibit a woodcut that depicted a baby with a halo alongside the message, "The New Messiah Will Be a Girl." Said college president Marvin Meyer, "I would consider this blatant blaspheming. The artist is saying, in my opinion, that there's a need for a new messiah because Christ is either dead or inadequate." According to the paper, the artist, a senior at Mankato State, said the piece was inspired by the birth of his daughter, Jayla, and expresses the idea of unlimited opportunities for her. The use of the messiah theme, he said, was "for impact." Of course.

A faculty member at Bethany explains the decision not to show the woodcut this way: "The issue for some, of course, is censorship. However, there are other pieces in the show which demonstrate that our objections were not victorian prudery. For us it is clear that the issue is theological. Had the artist not interpreted the painting for us, but simply depicted a girl-baby, fish, angel, and halo, we could have interpreted it to be a depiction of, for instance, the immaculate conception, which we do not accept, but which can hardly be considered blasphemous. Not long before the gallery displayed a marvelous collection of Byzantine icons, much of which is hardly consistent with Lutheran theology. We do not insist that everything displayed be fully compatible with our theology. But the artist interpreted the picture for us, and we therefore had to judge on those grounds."

It is a delicious little dispute joining questions of great moment. The aforementioned editorial is dead wrong, of course. There has not always been, nor need there be, conflicts between the worlds of religion and art, nor is religion (meaning

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Christianity in this case) a matter of unquestioned faith. The conflict arises—with religion and much else—when art is understood exclusively in terms of "individual creativity," meaning self-expression. That is a relatively recent, and decadent, understanding of art. And the editorial is wrong in suggesting that the regional Arts Council, because it is public, should no longer exhibit at religious schools. That is a prescription for public funds being used only for secular, or even explicitly antireligious, art. Had the very same woodcut borne the legend "Jesus is the Messiah," one may be fairly sure it would have been rejected by the Arts Council. Were such a rejection challenged, it would no doubt have been defended by invoking the separation of church and state.

What lovely complications arise from small squabbles. The newspaper loved it. The headline shouts, "Banned at Bethany." It's not quite "Banned in Boston," but then these kinds of things don't happen that often in Mankato, Minnesota. So was Bethany right in refusing to hang the woodcut? We don't know, but it was certainly within its rights. And it should certainly not be excluded from the benefits of a public arts program because it exercised its rights. The students, faculty, and staff of Bethany are, after all, part of the public, too. The regional Arts Council may propose what they think the public should look at, but in a democracy the people and institutions that are the public will finally decide for themselves. To paraphrase the *Free Press*, there will always be some conflict between the worlds of elite opinion and democracy, a world that cherishes unquestioned subservience to expertise and fashion and a world that is marked by the freedom to say no thanks.

FT

More on Intentions and Acts

"Moral Theology at Its Pique" was way back in the January issue, and all these months we've been intending to remedy a weakness in that analysis. You may recall that ours was a somewhat critical treatment of Father Richard McCormick's slash-and-burn attack on all and sundry who disagree with his interpretation of John Paul II's encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*. Fr. McCormick thought that our discussion of his *Theological Studies* article was a parody of his position, but then Fr. McCormick lives under the burden of believing that everybody, or almost everybody, who criticizes his position has "caricatured" or "distorted" his position. He has not to date given any sign of recognizing that he might possibly find some relief from his burden by stating his position more clearly. In any event, the comment in these pages left us exposed to being misunderstood on how "intention" figures in defining the moral "object" of an act. So we'll try again, with a little help from Martin Rhonheimer of the Athenaeum of the Holy Cross in Rome.

The question at stake is whether there are acts that are intrinsically—always and everywhere—morally wrong. McCormick suggests that it all depends. "The intention makes the act what it is," he declares. He gives a homely example: "For instance, handing money to another can be a variety of different things: payment of a debt, a loan, a gift, an alms, a bribe, etc. It is not possible to determine the morality of an action prior to determining what is objectively willed in it." Our mistake was in discussing the question on the grounds given in McCormick's example. Rhonheimer usefully points out that you cannot *just* hand money to another. A more sophisticated "action theory" makes clear that any act is accompanied by a "why" or "what for." An essential part of any definition of *what* one is doing is the *why* or *what for* in the doing of it. In other words, the intentionality of the act is included under the description of the act.

Rhonheimer, writing in the *Thomist*, has his own homely example: raising your arm. You might be raising your arm to greet someone, to give a starting signal, or to relieve a cramp. But what if somebody objects that you could simply be raising your arm without any intention at all? Rhonheimer: "Well, I would answer, just try to do it! It is true that it might just 'happen' (involuntarily, as a reflex, while sleeping), but this is not a human act. If, however, somebody wanted 'simply' to raise his arm, he again would do more than simply 'raise his arm.' If we subtracted from his doing this action the fact that his arm goes up, we would have left over, e.g., 'Wanting to show the author of this paper that he is wrong.' What would be left over is a 'why,' the intentional content or the 'form' of this act of 'raising one's arm.'"

Contra the revisionists among moral theologians, we do not have neutral "acts" that are then to be judged good or evil depending upon the intention involved (or, according to others, depending upon the consequences involved). Rhonheimer persuasively argues that "every human action is an intentional action. And this is why it is something that does not simply 'happen,' but something *willingly pursued* and as such *formed* or shaped by reason." In making his case, Rhonheimer's theory of action draws on John Paul's writings over the years about the "acting person." What is conventionally viewed as a subjective factor of intention defines the "object" of the act. That seems to be what McCormick & Co. are saying, until it is further

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noted that the intention is intrinsic to the act, that there is no way of accurately describing the act apart from the "why" and "what for" of the act.

Ordinary Experience

In theories of "moral norms" or "moral rules," the questions of intention and consequence sometimes get conflated. According to some theorists, there are particular "occurrences" (called "actions"), on the one hand, and the consequences brought about by them, on the other. If a person *intends* the best consequences, then it is these that come to be designated as the "object" of his act. Rhonheimer writes: "But this does not correspond to our ordinary experience as acting subjects and to the way we arrive at moral decisions; it rather has about it the air of casuistry. From the viewpoint of the acting subject we always encounter at least two intentionalities to be distinguished. If I break the promise of repaying somebody a determinate amount of money, causing by this his economic ruin because I, simultaneously, intend to prevent by this action the ruin of many others, I have *chosen* to break the promise given to my creditor *for the sake of* realizing an intention which is very laudable in itself. But here the object of choice ('breaking the promise') is not less intentionally 'taking a position' than the further intention ('benefitting others'). The same applies to killing or lying with good further intentions."

One should not expect the revisionists to do an overnight turnaround. Many of them have had very long and distinguished careers, and have enjoyed the acclaim of the majority of their academic peers. In a recent story in the *New York Times*, McCormick is referred to, almost as though it were self evident, as "the dean of moral theologians" in America, and that is no doubt what many consider him to be. There is also no reason to doubt that most of the revisionists earnestly believe they are serving the Church by helping to develop its moral teaching. At the same time, they are surely right in thinking that they are the object of sharp criticism in *Veritatis Splendor*. It is understandable that their first reaction is one of injury, of claiming that their work has been caricatured and distorted. But, upon reflection, they must recognize that that reaction, left unamended, invites the impression that they think the Pope is not only wrong but perhaps malicious, or just doesn't know what he's talking about. That, we have to assume, is not what they intend to say. Which brings us back to the question of intentions, and to the arguments of Martin Rhonheimer and others that Richard McCormick might want to address in a more balanced manner.

FT

The CHILDREN WILL CALL HER BLESSED

Suspicions are justifiably raised when it is said of an author that he "cannot be pigeonholed," or that he "moves us beyond sterile partisan disputes," or that he "transcends categories such as liberal and conservative." Such an author, one may think, is probably a mugwump or, given the liberal tilt of our intellectual culture, probably peddling the doctrines of the left while pretending to be above it all. We would be less than candid if we did not acknowledge that such suspicions have been directed at our friend, and frequent FT contributor, Jean Bethke Elshtain. Teaching now at the University of Chicago, after a long spell at Vanderbilt, Elshtain has recently come out with *Democracy on Trial* (Basic Books, 153 pp., $20).

The fact is that Elshtain is by no means above it all, nor does she want to be. She cares passionately about the democratic experiment, and she wants to engage as many people as possible in reflecting on its trials. It is true that she does not unfurl an ideological banner proclaiming her allegiance to "Liberalism" or "Conservatism" or some other party. But neither does she shy from addressing hard truths, for she knows that democracy, far from being a machine that runs of itself, is contingent upon truth and truths—about human nature, the dynamics of power, and what we can reasonably expect from history. *Democracy on Trial* is not yet another book attempting to redefine liberalism. Such books have been appearing since the late 1940s, and the last several years have witnessed torrents of them. When the chief demonstrated capacity of an ideology is to produce endless redefinitions of itself, that ideology is dead.

But Elshtain knows that there is a richer and much more comprehensive understanding of liberalism, an understanding that was largely responsible for producing, and may be necessary for sustaining, the democratic experiment. In that understanding, democracy is not sheer procedure but a moral undertaking. Democratic procedure must not be turned into an end in itself. As John Paul II contends in his most recent encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*, we must not "idolize" democracy by "democratizing" the truth on which democracy depends. That is the argument even more forcefully developed in *Veritatis Splendor*, an earlier encyclical that makes the case that, when freedom is untethered from truth, the very foundation of freedom is destroyed. For all the undoubted benefits of the free market, truth is not among the commodities to be traded.

Here Elshtain joins in John Paul II's critique of "consumerism," in which lives are consumed by consuming. She writes: "The 'sad effects of this blind

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submission to pure consumerism,' John Paul stated, are a combination of materialism and restless dissatisfaction as the 'more one possesses the more one wants.' Aspirations that cut deeper, that speak to human dignity within a world of others, are stifled. John Paul's name for this alternative aspiration is 'solidarity,' not 'a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people' but a determination to 'commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual because we are really responsible for all.' Through solidarity, John Paul said, we see 'the "other" . . . not just as some kind of instrument . . . but as our "neighbor," a "helper" . . . to be made a sharer on a par with ourselves in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God.'" Elshtain offers the solemn warning: "To the extent that John Paul's words strike us as utopian or naive, we have lost civil society."

Democracy on Trial is by no means resigned to such a loss. With a passion touched by poignancy, Elshtain offers this concluding reflection: "The task of the democratic political imagination is possible if civility is not utterly destroyed, if room remains for playful experimentation from deep seriousness of purpose free from totalistic intrusion and ideological control. For even when equality and justice seem far-off ideals, freedom preserves the human discourse necessary to work toward the realization of both. One day, as our children or their children or their children's children stroll in gardens, debate in public places, or poke through the ashes of a wrecked civilization, they may not be moved to call us blessed. But neither will they curse our memory, because we will not, through our silence, have permitted democracy to pass away as in a dream." It is only to be added that, to the extent that Elshtain's words strike us as utopian or naive, democracy has failed its trial.

FT

Just a Hint of Partisanship

Three days after Bill Clinton's inauguration, this oracle announced to visitors at his hospital bedside, "We are watching a man stumbling through the rubble of a ruined presidency." I was under medication, of course, and the judgment, not entirely untouched by partisanship, may have been premature, but there has been little since then to compel a reassessment. Within days of taking office, he was promoting the compatibility of soldiery and sodomy, and gleefully reversing very modest limitations on the abortion license—the latter on the very day of the annual pro-life march, and without the slightest acknowledgment that the great majority of Americans have deep moral anxieties about abortion on demand. This and much more while invoking a "mandate" from less than 43 percent of the voters. It struck us as unbelievably heavy-handed and politically dumb.

If we were perhaps excessively underwhelmed from the beginning, we continue to be impressed by those who have a seemingly infinite capacity to see castles rising from the rubble. Imagine an editorial titled, "Mrs. Clinton on Target Again." That's the lead in a recent issue of *America*, the Jesuit magazine. The editors declare that "even her sharpest critics should admit that the causes she chooses to promote are ones that really matter." The editors acknowledge that the health care scheme went down in flames. "All the same, historians in the twenty-first century may give President Clinton and his wife considerable credit for having sparked the first truly national debate on a thorough reform of health care." Imagine that, a man in possession of the office of President of the United States and a wife with unprecedented executive authority were able to spark a national debate. Some achievement. The fact is that almost the entire political culture recoiled in aversion from a half-baked proposal to socialize an additional 15 percent of the economy, thus making it impossible to discuss health care reform for years, if not decades, to come.

Nothing daunted, the editors of *America* cannot refrain from gushing over Mrs. Clinton's new campaign. "She has now taken up another cause of prime importance—the securing of the rights of women and children both at home and abroad." Mrs. Clinton has been making speeches on women's rights, joining in the general drumbeat for the UN conference on women in Beijing. Of course she says nothing about her husband's policy of overlooking human rights violations by China, including the slave labor of uncounted thousands and forced abortions for pregnant women with more than one child. Nor do the editors of *America* mention that Mrs. Clinton and her allies insist that the unlimited abortion license, "at home and abroad," is a nonnegotiable part of their understanding of women's rights.

America insists that it does not dissent from the Church's teaching on abortion, and we have no reason to doubt that. It simply seems that that teaching is not very important. When it comes to abortion, those who are fearful of being criticized as one-issue thinkers tend to turn it into a nonissue. What really matters, we are told, is "to accelerate a basic change in the way both women and men look at the traditional division of labor between the sexes." And of that basic change Mrs. Clinton, who

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made the smart decision to marry a man who was going places, thus freeing her to volunteer for general do-goodism, is presumably the avatar. And if from a Jesuit viewpoint she does not quite grasp all the complexities regarding, er, reproductive rights, well, nobody's perfect. The recently completed worldwide meeting of Jesuits called upon them to demonstrate "the courage to listen to women." To some women, of course. Those women who hand out the coveted prizes for carefully nuancing the inconveniences of Catholic teaching will no doubt agree that *America* is, as its editors might say, on target again.

FT

The Globalism of a Forum of Formers

At the National Cathedral (Episcopal) in Washington, some old lions of peace movements past gathered to protest the "Contract with America" and to support the United Nations. Speakers included William Sloane Coffin, former head of SANE; Bryan Hehir, former policy guru at the U.S. Catholic Conference; Daniel Ellsberg, former celebrity leaker of the "Pentagon Papers"; and Alan Geyer, former editor of *Christian Century*. In February the House of Representatives passed legislation that curtails the President's authority to deploy U.S. troops in UN operations and reduces the U.S. share of the UN's peacekeeping budget. If the legislation passes the Senate, "peacekeeping could be mortally wounded in this UN anniversary year," said Geyer.

Other speakers deplored what they perceived to be similarities between the current political mood and that of the 1920s, when the U.S. refused to join the League of Nations. Coffin set the tone of the conference in his opening address: "Religious people particularly are called on to moderate national sovereignty and to increase global loyalty and so help the United Nations." Religious people are indeed called on to do that, by folk such as Mr. Coffin. But it is doubtful, to say the least, that there is any religious reason to reduce national sovereignty in favor of the political apparatus of the UN. Rhetoric that pits the universal against the particular, the international against the national, and the national against the local would seem to be increasingly counterproductive. That is not necessarily because Americans are in a reactive or isolationist mood—although many certainly are—but because they are disillusioned with political schemes and schemers.

The grander the scheme, the more robust the skepticism. Bigness no longer defines the moral high ground. What is viewed as the right has come around to embracing what used to be a slogan of the left, "Small is beautiful." It is far from self-evident that "global loyalty" is morally superior to national loyalty or, for that matter, local loyalty. Caring for the global family can be a great deal easier than taking care of one's own family. It is true that isolationism is a danger, but it will not be countered effectively by old lions whose rhetoric and track records make isolationism so appealing to so many. What is needed is a doctrine of national interest that encompasses international responsibility. Neither the White House nor the Congress seems interested in, or capable of, articulating such a doctrine, and it is not likely to come from a forum of formers who are reading from scripts that in the present political culture are, if intelligible at all, thoroughly implausible.

From 1990 to 1993, this scribe served on the commission established by the White House and Congress to study American policy toward the UN, and it was a generally discouraging experience. I strongly disagree with those who say we should withdraw from the UN, but, the more one learns about the corruptions and confusions that dominate that hapless organization, the more difficult it is to make the case for maintaining, never mind increasing, the present level of U.S. participation. I'm not sure what is meant by "global loyalty"—perhaps it would become a virtue in the event of invasion from other planets—but I am sure that such jargon contributes little to understanding why so many thoughtful Americans are coming to a jaundiced view of the UN and other institutions created in support of an internationalism that is now unsupported by clear doctrine, or any doctrine at all.

FT

The Glorious Doctor

It's chiefly a Roman Catholic phenomenon at present, this discovery of Hans Urs von Balthasar, but in time it will almost certainly engage Protestants, Jews, and everybody else interested in the possibilities of theology at the edge of the Third Millennium. More than thirty volumes have appeared to date in English (mostly from Ignatius Press), and more are on the way. It seems implausible that one man could have written so much about so much so brilliantly. At his Requiem Mass (he died in 1988 at age eighty-three), Cardinal Ratzinger

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declared von Balthasar the most learned man in Europe, and it would be as believable if he had said the most learned man in the world.

Shortly before he died, von Balthasar was made a cardinal by Pope John Paul II—a high level imprimatur on his life's work. This despite the fact that some thought von Balthasar stepped across the line of orthodoxy on a few subjects. For instance, his *Dare We Hope that All Men Be Saved?* (with a brief discourse on hell) is a daring reflection on universal redemption. His answer is yes, we dare so hope and should so hope, while maintaining the orthodox understanding that the final judgment is, of course, God's alone. Similarly, in *Mysterium Paschale*, one of his more difficult books, von Balthasar contends that Christ's descent into hell should be understood in terms not of his triumph but of his final abandonment by God. That is a break from the interpretation of the received tradition, but is considered by Catholic authorities to be a theological opinion that can legitimately be held and explored.

Von Balthasar was a strange case in a number of ways. He never held a conventional academic appointment, for example. Born in Lucerne and studying all over Europe, he started out as a Jesuit. Then he met Adrienne von Speyr, a medical doctor and mystic whom he received into the Church. He reluctantly left the Jesuits in 1950 to found with von Speyr a secular institute, a kind of religious order whose members continue their work in the world. They also established a house to publish his many books as well as her writings. Von Balthasar repeatedly and extravagantly (or so it seems) declared his indebtedness to the thought of Adrienne von Speyr. She, he said, was his chief inspiration, and he sometimes went so far as to suggest that his work was but a footnote to hers. This is something of a puzzlement to many, including this writer, who have read von Speyr in search of what von Balthasar found so remarkable. But we have to take him at his word, and the sufficient tribute to von Speyr's achievement is that she inspired von Balthasar.

Fr. Edward Oakes, long familiar to the readers of this journal, is among the puzzled, and the von Speyr connection is one of the few questions that he does not attempt to resolve in his remarkable new book *Pattern of Redemption* (Continuum, 334 pp, $29.50). To bring together in one volume the astonishing achievement of Hans Urs von Balthasar is, to say the least, a daunting task, but *Pattern of Redemption* does just that. Robert L. Wilken, also familiar to our readers, says, "Hans Urs von Balthasar is a thrilling writer and Edward Oakes has written a thrilling book about him. . . . Whether one is seeking an introduction to von Balthasar's vast literary oeuvre or an interpretation of the whole, this is the book to read." Book blurbs are notoriously unreliable, but Wilken says no more than the truth.

The Glory of God

About a life's work so comprehensive and so complex, one hesitates to pinpoint where the gist of the project is to be found, but one ventures to suggest that it is in *Herrlichkeit.* That is a seven-volume work translated in English under the title, *The Glory of the Lord.* This von Balthasar describes as a "theological aesthetics." (Not, he insists, an aesthetic theology!) The point is that God reveals himself not only as truth and goodness but also as beauty. Christian theology is reflection on the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ. If von Balthasar is one day formally recognized as a Doctor of the Church (*Doctores Ecclesiae*), he might well bear the title of the Glorious Doctor. Of the three "transcendentals" (the good, the true, and the beautiful), von Balthasar writes:

"The beautiful guards the other transcendentals and sets the seal on them: there is nothing true or good, in the long term, without the light of grace of that which is freely bestowed. And a Christianity which went along with modernity and subscribed merely to the true (faith as a system of correct propositions) or merely to the good (faith as that which is most useful and healthy for the subject) would be a Christianity knocked down from its own heights. When the saints interpreted their existence in the light of God's greater glory, they were always the guardians of the beautiful."

It is really quite impossible in this brief comment to indicate the range of von Balthasar's work, or how, in a manner profoundly and pervasively Trinitarian, he incorporates the entirety of human thought and experience in the work of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Reading von Balthasar is frequently as much an experience of contemplation as of analysis or argument, which is no doubt to be expected in a theology of aesthetics that relentlessly orients the reader to the glory of God. But there is also argument and analysis in abundance. There is, for instance, *The Theology of Karl Barth* (newly translated by Oakes and published by Ignatius) in which von Balthasar addresses some classic Protestant-Catholic disagreements over the nature of grace and the analogy of being (*analogia entis*). Von Balthasar greatly appreciates Barth's view of biblical theology as God's unique witness to himself, but contends also that the Bible is the fulfillment of all human efforts to apprehend the mystery of being.

Where to begin reading von Balthasar? Perhaps with one of the easier, but deceptively simple, little works, such as *Credo* (Crossroad), an explanation of the Apostles' Creed written toward the end of his life, or *Heart of the World* (Ignatius), an intimate theological poem on what it means to believe. Or readers with some theological training may want to take a deep breath and dive into the first volume of *The Glory of the Lord*, being forewarned that von Balthasar is known to become a habit that is hard to

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break, and that there is a long, long shelf of von Balthasar ahead once they get hooked. In any event, those who are looking for an introduction to von Balthasar as well as those who have read him and want to see how all the pieces fit together will warmly welcome Edward Oakes' *Pattern of Redemption: The Theology of Hans Urs von Balthasar.* It is an achievement worthy of its subject.

FT

KEEPING SCORE

On Tuesdays and Thursdays (or is it Wednesdays and Mondays?), I am inclined to embrace the motto: Lose a few, lose a few. It really is in large part a matter of mood that determines how one rates gains and defeats. But, for what it's worth, at the annual meeting of the Institute Council a while back, a few of us sat around playing the inevitable (at least for me) game of Keeping Score. On some of the issues that matter most to us, are we better off now than we were at this time last year? Here, in briefest summary, is how part of the game turned out.

• Abortion? Answer: Don't know. The pro-abortionists have lost the public argument, and they lost massively in the November 1994 elections. Sentiment in support of unlimited abortion license, always small, has declined further. And yet, the pro-life forces in Congress and the states seem eerily paralyzed; having more potential influence, they seem less certain about what to do with it.

• Radical feminism and family policy? A very encouraging year. Antifamily feminists thrown on the defensive, a major turnaround among opinion makers on the irreplaceable father and the need for stable marriages. Immense rebuilding required, but the direction is toward common sense on what is required for children and families to flourish.

• Affirmative action (a.k.a. quotas)? Very major and promising change. The intellectual argument has been won and legally mandated quotas are on the way out, although they will likely continue for years in business, universities, and other institutions.

• Multiculturalism? Under increasing intellectual attack, diminishing influence in most public policy areas, but solidly entrenched in educational establishment where there is slight prospect for change in near future. This is yet another question on which the university in particular is increasingly a backwater suffering from severe cultural lag.

• Christian unity? Significant advances, especially between Catholics and evangelical Protestants. But too early to see whether the initiatives of the past year will take hold. That may take decades. No change in what appears to be the inexorable decline of oldline Protestant bodies, although rumblings here and there of revived theological seriousness. Eastern Orthodoxy in place, although renewed excitements (positive and negative) about possible reconciliation with Rome.

• Christian-Jewish relations? Probably not substantive change, but big troubles in relation to cultural conservatism or, as its enemies prefer, the "Religious Right." Many Jews dug in for liberal holy war in name of secularism, many Christians growingly impatient with charges of anti-Semitism. This could get ugly. The more hopeful course is moral, religious, and theological engagement, but only a minority on both sides seems to understand that. So we'll keep working at it.

• Popular culture? Debonair nihilism seemingly unlimited, and no change in sight. Bright spots, very small bright spots, here and there, but the pattern of debasement continues unabated—and continues to spread through the rest of the world as perhaps America's chief disservice to world history.

• The homosexualist campaign? It is being turned back on almost every front (except on the campus, of course). By their own testimony, the leaders are fragmented and dispirited. 1993 was the all-out cultural blitz, and it fizzled. School districts increasingly rejecting "alternative lifestyle" curricular propaganda. As a cultural force, homosexuality is returning to the closet, although the door will likely be kept ajar. But nasty shocks from courts on same-sex marriage still possible.

• Eugenics? This encompasses everything from embryo research to euthanasia to the Human Genome Project—the making, manipulating, and disposing of human life. At a theoretical level, given technological drives and commercial interests, the juggernaut of "the culture of death" seems unstoppable, but there is a widespread and growing measure of intelligent anxiety. The advance of euthanasia and doctor-assisted suicide was slowed, although not stopped. Clinton Administration was sharply set back at Cairo in ambition to impose abortion and population control on poor countries.

• The underclass? On welfare and related policies a revolution is underway. The contest is depicted as one between the hard-hearted and the compassionate. The reality is a movement toward proliferating experiments with approaches that try to actually help the poor to become nonpoor.

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Returns on what works are years away. Even in the best scenarios, so much will have to be rebuilt from scratch, notably the patterns of family formation. But there appears to be a decisive turn from the business as usual of the last three disastrous decades.

• Immigration? Maybe big battles ahead, maybe not. Depends on whether the question of bringing some sanity and control to immigration policy can be separated from disputes over race and ethnic hubris. The lines of debate on both right and left are still emerging, but immigration is on the national agenda as it was not a year ago.

• Foreign policy? The U.S. still has none and seems incapable of getting one any time soon. Which means that, for the first time in fifty years, the world has no reasonably predictable understandings for the settling of international conflicts. Pray that nothing really major happens in foreign affairs in the next year. Stop the world, America has gotten off.

And that, in an all too cursory manner, is an overview of a few of the changes in the past year. All in all, and given the evils to which fallen humankind is prone, the indicators in the political and intellectual culture provide reason for carefully restrained hopefulness. Of course the above represents no more than impressions gained from a rambling Friday afternoon conversation with friends and colleagues, and a year from now it may look pretty dumb. But for what it's worth . . .

FT

While We're At It

■ Clark Morphew is religion writer for the *Saint Paul Pioneer Press* (Minnesota), and his column is titled "Conservative Christians Bear Watching." His point is that "mainline" types are missing the powerful resurgence of religion in public life, and his conclusion sounds marvelously civil: "Then, a reasonable debate, based on facts and the common good, could take place. What a refreshing transformation that would be." It would be refreshing indeed, but a reasonable debate with Mr. Morphew seems very unlikely on the basis of what he says along the way to his conclusion. The enemy is "conservative hitmen who control airwaves, newspapers, propaganda machines, and computer bulletin boards." He says that attention must be paid "the Rev. Pat Robertson on his infamous cable-television talk show." Conservative Christians "drive their congregations into hatred instead of love." "Yes, they are legion [remember the demons and the swine?], and unless the mainstream media get with the program, realize the power and influence these people can rally, and expose them with the same diligence they use to cover seats of government, the problem will plague us for years." With these devils Mr. Morphew proposes to have a "a reasonable debate based on facts and the common good"? Like so many people in what they still complacently think of as the mainstream, Clark Morphew seems to assume that the only thing required for a reasonable debate of differences is the extirpation of those with whom he disagrees. We're going to have a civil conversation here, so why don't you people get lost. The reaction is not atypical of mainliners awakening to the fear that they have been marginalized.

■ All of a sudden the phrase is popping up everywhere. Well, not exactly everywhere, but in a lot of places where people are debating "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." *Articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*—the article by which the Church stands or falls. The reference, of course, is to the Reformation insistence upon justification by faith alone (*sola fide*). I was a while back with my friend William Lazareth, Bishop Emeritus of the New York Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and no mean scholar, and I wondered out loud who first used the phrase. He went back to his books and has come up with the answer. It was Valentius E. Loescher (1673-1749), a Lutheran theologian at Wittenberg, in a 1718 essay, "Timotheus Verinus," written against the Pietists. The Pietists, one notes, were the precursors of many of today's evangelical Protestants who have quite fallen in love with the phrase. As we have had occasion to remark before, history has many ironies in the fire.

■ *Catholic World Report*, published by Fr. Joseph Fessio, provides about as good an overview of Catholic news in global perspective as any magazine around. It is also very conservative. At least that was always our impression. Until we read this story on why the Church cannot change its teaching on contraception. "A pope could no more 'drop' this 'ban' than she could drop one of the Ten Commandments." Father Fessio, call your office.

■ Civil liberties and religious groups celebrated with much ado the passage of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), and understandably so. There has been extended discussion of RFRA in these pages and we are, all in all, very much for it. RFRA is, at the very least, an important legislative effort to secure protections too often slighted by the judiciary. At the same time, nobody should have any illusions that RFRA "resolved" the free exercise question. The judges who so diminished religious

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freedom in the first place are still in place, and they will be interpreting RFRA as well. Thoughtful articles are now appearing in the law journals and they emphasize both the achievement and the limits of RFRA. Two are of particular interest: Thomas C. Berg in the *Villanova Law Review*, "What Hath Congress Wrought? An Interpretive Guide to the Religious Freedom Restoration Act," and Scott Idleman in the *Texas Law Review*, "The Religious Freedom Restoration Act: Pushing The Limits of Legislative Power." Both writers provide a salutary reminder that the much-invoked "eternal vigilance" is required if the first freedom of the First Amendment—the free exercise of religion—is to be protected in the future. Lucius Bunton, a federal judge in Texas, recently ruled RFRA unconstitutional. Through RFRA the Congress "usurps powers traditionally granted to courts." How dare they. By the time this sees print, the Congress will have held hearings on a proposed amendment aimed at rescuing from the imperial judiciary the constitutional guarantee of the free excercise of religion. An amendment carefully crafted to avoid getting sidetracked on the narrow question of school prayer could secure what RFRA rightly intended to do.

■ Over at Alice Tully Hall, for a musical program commemorating the Holocaust, the Bacchanalia Festival Orchestra asked Vladimir Pozner to do the narration, and he accepted. "I felt I had no choice," said Mr. Pozner. On cable television, Mr. Pozner does a show with Phil Donahue, a kind of bacchanalia of debased discourse. For years he was a staple on talk shows, dependably defending the Soviet Union and all its works and ways. In 1952 his family moved from the U.S. to "the future that works," and Pozner was reared in Moscow. Pozner says he encountered anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union "and it played a big role in my decision to leave the Communist Party in 1989." It is not unfair to note that 1989 is a bit on the late side. "I felt I had no choice," says Mr. Pozner. The fact is that for years and years he had a choice, and he chose to make a very good living and to become something of a celebrity by serving as an apologist for a regime guilty of some of the greatest atrocities in human history. One hopes that at least a few patrons at Alice Tully Hall that night recognized the smarmy moralism of Vladimir Pozner and wondered why a program in New York should thus desecrate the memory of the Holocaust.

■ Here's the heading of a story in *30 Days* on Russian Orthodoxy: "Spiritual and Western—that was how Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini described Alexis II. A profile of the Estonian-born Patriarch of Moscow." Being described as "Western" by the Cardinal Archbishop of Milan will no doubt give Alexis' credibility in Russia a real boost.

■ Boston, Litchfield, New York, Raleigh, Arlington, Atlanta, Louisville, St. Louis, Cleveland. Those are some of the places where Tom Wright will be speaking in September and November on "Who Was Jesus?" Wright is Dean of Lichfield Cathedral, England, and a renowned New Testament scholar. For information on these one-day seminars, contact Catherine Wilson of the Oxford Summer School in Religious Studies, 820 Park Avenue, Worland, Wyoming 82401. Telephone (307) 347-3836.

■ The National Council of Churches (NCC) reports that, although it doesn't have the money yet, a London court has ordered the return of some of the $8 million it invested in fraudulent securities of the Banka Bohemia in Prague. According to Ecumenical News International, "The investments were in 'prime bank guarantees,' a category of financial instrument that [NCC lawyer] Richard Lawler said did not really exist. Although $1.2 billion of these instruments was reportedly printed in the name of Banka Bohemia, Lawler said he knew of nobody except the NCC who had bought any." Also at the NCC, Methodist minister Joseph E. Agne has resigned as director of the racial justice office. ENI reports, "He blamed lack of financial support for his resignation." There was no money to keep his office going, no money for program activities, and no money for his travel. Before leaving, Agne stated that white supremacy is "running wild" in America, and "the atmosphere of intolerance in the U.S. compares with prewar Germany in 1929 and 1930." The NCC, a cooperative agency of more than thirty church bodies, maintains an office in New York City. Banka Bohemia went into receivership last year.

■ He's hardly the front runner, but Alan Keyes is far ahead of the Republican pack when it comes to defining the moral and cultural questions of 1996. Herewith a snippet of the kind of rhetoric that has audiences standing on their chairs and cheering: "Why is it that we spend so much money on welfare and illegitimacy? Why is it that we spend so much money on crime and violence in our streets? Why is it even that we spend so much money dealing with the problems of irresponsible behavior that contribute to the decline of the health of this nation? I think you all know in your hearts what the real answer is. We don't have money problems, we have moral problems. And it's time we stood up and faced that truth! . . . I don't know how we're gonna face that truth, if . . . we can look our daughters in the eye and tell them that it is somehow consistent with freedom for them to trample on the human rights of their unborn offspring. . . . Freedom requires that at the end of the day you accept the constraint that is required . . . a respect for the laws of nature and nature's God that say unequivocally that our daughters do not have the right to do what is wrong, that our sons do not have the right to do what is

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wrong. . . . Do you think that the decline of marriage and the moral dissolution of the family is a money problem? Or do you think it's a problem that comes from putting the self first, from deciding that there are no obligations that have to be respected, and at the end of the day freedom is just another kind of empty licentiousness?" Keyes, an author, columnist, and Assistant Secretary of State in the Reagan Administration, is a Catholic who has clearly been doing his homework in the Church's social teaching.

■ Do not confuse *Priest* with *The Priest*. Both appeared in the last couple of months, and both are all-out attacks on all things Catholic, but that's where the similarities end. The first is a movie that even reviewers who love the message have criticized as being one long rickety cliché. The second is a book by Thomas M. Disch, published by the distinguished house of Knopf. In this novel, Father Patrick Bryce is an all-out villain, truly a wicked fellow. You wouldn't believe the things he's up to and into. Reviewing the book in the *New York Times Book Review*, Terry Teachout writes, "What we have here is an omnium-gatherum of Anti-Catholicism's Greatest Hits, not a few of which are getting a trifle long in the tooth." Nonetheless, says Teachout, Disch knows how to tell a story, and he has a real passion. "Rather than reforming the Church, he would clearly prefer to sow salt on its ashes, a point of view more widely shared among American liberals than is commonly realized—or admitted." Mr. Teachout has a kind of grudging admiration for the novelist's acuity in recognizing the real enemy. He writes: "The Vatican is arguably the last conservative institution in the West that takes its own ideas seriously enough to seek to apply them with absolute consistency; it makes perfect sense that those who oppose those ideas, Mr. Disch included, should do so with quasi-religious fervor. 'If intolerable alternatives are to be avoided,' Sir Isaiah Berlin once said, 'life must achieve various types of often uneasy equilibrium. I believe this deeply: but it is not a doctrine which inspires the young. They seek absolutes; and that usually, sooner or later, ends in blood.' The American political system was designed to achieve uneasy equilibrium among a wide variety of competing forces; it is utterly ill suited to resolving the irreconcilable differences that separate Thomas M. Disch from Pope John Paul II. Yet it is now being asked to resolve those differences, by fiat if necessary: that is what the present-day 'culture wars' are all about. Though one may rightly bemoan the fact that yet another novelist of talent has chosen to join these bloody wars, Mr. Disch surely deserves full credit for having gone straight to the root of the matter. Compared with the Vicar of Christ, Rush Limbaugh and Newt Gingrich are strictly small potatoes."

■ These have been difficult months for Episcopalians. "So what else is new?" comes a voice from the ecclesiastical peanut gallery. True enough, but we mean particularly difficult. A bishop commits suicide and it turns out he had been involved for years in adulterous relationships, some of which, according to official sources, were "abusive." (The tone of official comments we have seen leaves the impression that adultery is more or less taken in stride, while "abusive" adultery is the cause of great moral offense.) Then there is a multimillion-dollar financial scandal in the already floundering national offices in New York. In addition, ten bishops have made formal presentments against other bishops who have ordained sexually active gays. And so forth. But disturbing the doldrums is a bit of good news, according to *Care and Community*, an independent newsletter. "Last summer's General Convention passed three resolutions pertaining to abortion. Some readers may find them surprisingly 'pro-life.' China's coercive abortion policy is condemned; the proliferating ministries of crisis pregnancy centers—where true alternatives to abortion are made possible—are commended; and in a strong theological statement abortion is clearly distinguished from birth control, described as invariably tragic, and emphatically opposed for a group of reasons which, collectively, cover the vast majority of abortions. (Studies repeatedly show that most abortions are desired for 'birth control' when contraception failed to occur.) Indeed, in the opinion of the editor, the Episcopal Church's official abortion position is accurately described as 'pro-life theologically, while pro-choice politically.'" Making the necessary linkages between the theology of life and the politics of life is one of the great services rendered by the new encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae*. While allowing that the question of abortion is not addressed directly in the Bible, John Paul makes a detailed argument that the foundational truths of biblical faith make imperative the protection of unborn and other innocent life. It has been suggested that, since the argument did not need to be made in the context of Catholic moral teaching, it is principally addressed to other Christians and to Jews who claim fidelity to such foundational truths. One continues to scour the Protestant and Jewish press for a considered response to that argument.

■ That criminals get more sympathy from the media than their victims is a common and frequently justified complaint. *America*, the Jesuit magazine, goes a step further and treats criminals as authorities on crime—which, of course, in a perverse sense they are. In a letter to the editor, Paul Baumann of *Commonweal* tries to reintroduce a measure of common sense and moral decency: "Michael Ross's concern for the financial burden the death penalty places on taxpayers is touching. Almost as touching

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is his empathy for the 'anxiety, frustration, and anger that most people feel toward the seemingly uncontrollable plague of crime that our country is currently experiencing.' What is missing from Ross's article ('A Voice from Death Row,' 2/11) are the facts concerning his own contribution to that plague. I happen to know a little about Ross because I live in Eastern Connecticut, where his rape-murder spree left behind a sense of outrage that it would be difficult to put a price tag on—although it seems that Ross is trying desperately to do just that in that pages of *America*. Ross was convicted of raping and murdering six young women. If we have to read Ross's pathetic attempts to be clever, we can at least remember who his victims were. Here are their names and ages: Leslie Shelley, 14, April Brunais, 14, Wendy L. Baribeault, 17, Tammy L. Williams, 17, Robyn D. Stravinsky, 19, and Debra Smith Taylor, 23. Ross has also said that he raped and murdered two women in New York. Whether the state should execute Ross for these heinous crimes is a difficult moral question. But Ross's smug little taunt that he has 'no objections to running up the cost' to save himself gives away the self-serving charade of his argument. I can't imagine what the families of the young women he killed must feel when they see his name in print and detect the shamelessness of his anti-crime rhetoric. Surely *America* can find less blood-stained hands in which to entrust such arguments." Nothing daunted and nothing learned, a subsequent issue of *America* carries an uncritical interview with Jean Harris that is titled "Women and Criminal Justice." Ms. Harris is described as a woman who spent twelve years in prison "following a lengthy trial in which she was found responsible for the death of Herman Tarnower, M.D." More precisely, she was convicted of killing him. The recent murder of Jeffrey Dahmer presumably precludes *America* running a piece by him on discrimination against gays in prison.

■ There will, time and space permitting, be more here on the lengthy Thirty-fourth General Congregation of the Jesuits that adjourned in Rome at the end of March. A major document on women called for "personal concern" for the "unjust treatment and exploitation of women." It urged "all Jesuits to listen carefully and courageously to the experience of women." One would expect no less from a Society once noted for the indomitable courage of its missionary martyrs. Also, Fr. Stephen Sundborg, an American who helped draft a document on the laity, has declared, "The church of the next millennium will be a church of lay people." With a ratio of about two thousand to one, a person might think it is a church of lay people at present. One is reminded of Cardinal Newman's response when asked whether there was a role for the laity: "We would look pretty silly without them, wouldn't we?" It is true that some wag has projected that, on July 23, 2023, the Anglican communion will at last achieve a one-to-one ratio between clergy and laity. While that might provide opportunities for pastoral care of unprecedented intensity, it might also mean a church composed entirely of laity since nobody would be left to support the clergy. We have not yet gotten to a careful reading of the final documents of the thirty-fourth General Congregation, but fully expect that they will reward close attention.

■ Turning sixty, feminist icon Gloria Steinem had these pensées for the *New York Times*. "Feminism isn't responsible for divorce; marriage is responsible for divorce." On last November's election: "I don't think we'd be seeing violence at the clinics if the pro-life movement hadn't been defeated at the polls." (Yep, she said "pro-life.") "I mean, some of those elections were a matter of one hundred votes! Can you believe it? Mandate? What mandate? What if we could get people out to vote? I could do it. I probably should. I could go out on the ramparts for the vote the way I went out on the ramparts for women. God, I have a hard time separating what I need to do from what has to be done." It is the burden of being only a goddess.

■ Ignored by the press here but carried on UPI and published in the London *Daily Telegraph* is a report "that doctors at the state-run Shenzhen Health Centre for Women and Children hand out bottles of thumb-sized aborted babies to be made into meat cakes or soup with pork and ginger. Zou Qin, a doctor at the Luo Hu Clinic in Shenzhen, said the fetuses were 'nutritious' and that she had eaten one hundred herself in the last six months. 'We don't carry out abortions just to eat fetuses,' said Qin. '[But they would be] wasted if not eaten.'" Two hundred and fifty years later, Dean Swift's modest proposal might indeed seem modest to the hosts of the UN conference on women and human rights in Beijing.

■ Great Moments in American Religious History that Somehow Got Lost: With much brouhaha, the Interfaith Alliance was launched in the fall of 1994. Including churches and agencies of the liberal oldline, and funded in large part by the Democratic Party, the new group declared that it would counter the "extremism" of religious conservatives with "the unifying principles of all faiths—compassion, tolerance, and justice." Anyone possessing information leading to discovery of the whereabouts of the Interfaith Alliance is asked to call Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition. They promised to counter him, and he's feeling neglected. Search parties might want to team up with others who are looking for the Democratic Party.

■ A favorite photo magneted to our refrigerator door is that of John Paul II shaking a finger of reprimand at a kneeling Ernesto Cardenal when the

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Pope visited Nicaragua in 1983. Poet-priest Cardenal was, against the instructions of the Vatican, Minister of Culture in the Sandinista government from 1979 to 1990. The Sandinistas were defeated in democratic elections in 1990, but under former president Daniel Ortega have continued to control the army and security forces. Sixteen years after he hailed their revolution as exemplifying the justice demanded by liberation theology, Fr. Cardenal has left the Sandinista movement, accusing Ortega and other leaders of "corruption and lack of morals."

■ The name of Dr. Jack Kevorkian, "doctor death," still pops up from time to time. Writing in the *Lutheran*, the official publication of the ELCA, Bishop George Mocko of Maryland says his problem is not with what Kevorkian does but with the way he is doing it. "So the sort of thing Kevorkian is doing is by no means new. Behind it can lie motivations a Christian can understand. My problem with Kevorkian is the publicity. He is a showboat. Those decisions and actions belong in a 'holy of holies.' We've been taking care of these things in quiet ways quite adequately," writes the bishop. "What he is doing can be good and even holy," but his mistake is in doing it publicly and thus involving laws and lawyers. "Rather," writes Bishop Mocko, "quiet, sober honesty, openness, tears, prayers, hugs, a quiet commending, more prayers, tears, and hugs. And then peace. The peace of God." The problem with Kevorkian is his failure to understand that the business of killing people and helping them to kill themselves should be handled discreetly and with spiritual sensitivity. In short, you're trespassing on our turf, Dr. Kevorkian. As the bishop says, "We've been taking care of these things in quiet ways quite adequately."

■ We had thought to do something major with the new Tad Szulc book, *Pope John Paul II: The Biography* (Scribner, $27.50). Alas, it is anything but *the* biography. Szulc, formerly with the *New York Times*, is personally sympathetic to the Pope, but his telling of the story provides very little that is new, reinforces the most stereotypically leftist interpretations of this pontificate, and is embarrassingly riddled with errors of fact, large and small. Like Karol Wojtyla, Szulc grew up in Poland, and his section on the Pope's boyhood and youth is perhaps the most valuable. But beyond that, his construal of John Paul is indistinguishable from what one expected from the late Peter Hebblethwaite and is never disappointed in expecting from the *National Catholic Reporter*. In short, the Pope is a social progressive and theological reactionary. In April, David Shaw, the media analyst of the *Los Angeles Times*, did an admirable four-part series on how the press reports on the Pope. Such reporting, says Shaw, is superficial and distorted because most journalists are abysmally ignorant of theology and church affairs, and preoccupied with fitting everything into the categories of dispute over politics and matters sexual. For all the time that Szulc put into this project, and for all the access he had to the Pope and other key players, *Pope John Paul II* is almost a case study in the kind of journalistic failure analyzed by Shaw. In the months ahead, at least two other books on the Pope will likely be making their appearance, at which time we hope to run a review article that will also deal with the Szulc book in greater detail. Meanwhile, we regret that we cannot recommend *Pope John Paul II*, since we had talked with Szulc and others who had worked with him and really did expect something more interesting.

■ On May 18, the Pope's birthday, all the buildings in the Vatican sport the papal flag. Our Rome reporter tells us that this year the flag on the world headquarters of the Society of Jesus, just off St. Peter's Square, was flying upside down, and he sent along supporting photographs of the same. He called to find out why the Jesuits were transmitting the international distress signal, but there was no answer. Observers who were interviewed speculated that the message was that the Society of Jesus is in distress or that the pontificate of John Paul II is in distress. Our reporter, perhaps more charitably, opines that there was no message at all. He thinks the Jesuits, not being what they used to be, probably did not know right side up from upside down. While his charity is no doubt commendable, we are reluctant to accept the loss of yet another useful word, which is why we so strongly resist the idea that "Jesuitical" now means not very smart.

■ We are pleased, for the second year in succession, to publish the Templeton Prize Address. (Michael Novak's "Awakening from Nihilism" appeared in the August/September 1994 issue.) The relationship between religion and science has been an abiding concern of John Templeton, founder of the Templeton Prize. And, of course, it is a question regularly addressed in these pages. We fully expect that some readers, while admiring the careful reflection of Paul Davies, will conclude that he stops far short of where his thought should lead him. Believing Jews and Christians think that we do indeed have "a clue how mind and matter are related" and "how consciousness fits into the physical universe," and that clue is revelation—in Torah and Israel, in Jesus and Church. It is worth asking whether Mr. Davies stops short of revealed truth or is in fact pondering aspects of the mystery for which biblical faith provides a name. If the latter is the case, as we think it is, Christians and Jews are challenged to ask themselves why thoughtful seekers such as Paul Davies hesitate to name the Name.

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■ Evangelist Tony Campolo has "grown" wondrously. Campolo, who teaches sociology at Eastern College (Baptist) in Pennsylvania, is admiringly profiled in *Christian Century*. "As a sociologist by trade, I think mainline churches are about to experience a revitalization, a renewal, a dynamic explosion," he says. In the sixties and seventies, the liberal churches "articulated a social agenda with which I enthusiastically identified." Among the issues he does not mention is abortion, but he has a great deal to say about his support for lesbian and gay rights, and deplores the conservative ascendancy in political life. "With other Christians," he observes, "we worry that many of the social advances that have been won in the past twenty years are on the verge of eradication." He rightly cautions against the excessive politicizing of religion, which has reached the point where people choose their church on the basis of their social or political views. He then rebuts the charge that he advocates "gay marriages," adding that "my wife and I differ on this point, and we belong to two different churches for that reason."

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Sources: On the *New Yorker*, see Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty*, page 35; Art Spiegelman in *Catholic New York*, April 13, 1995; and Maureen Dowd in *New York Times*, April 20, 1995. On British group OutRage, *catholic eye*, March 24, 1995 and the *Tablet*, March 11, 1995. On artistic freedom and freedom, the *Free Press* (of Mankato, Minn.), April 4 and 5, 1995. Martin Rhonheimer article, "'Intrinsically Evil Acts' and the Moral Viewpoint: Clarifying a Central Teaching of *Veritatis Splendor*," in the *Thomist*, January 1994. Editorial on Mrs. Clinton in *America*, May 6, 1995. On meeting of peace activists at the National Cathedral, *Christian Century*, March 22-29, 1995.

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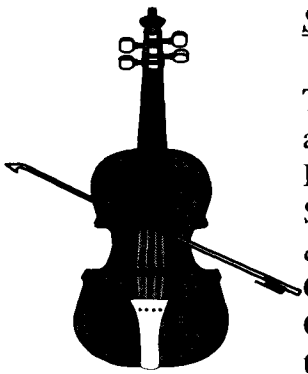

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